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LIFE'S SUNSET.

BY M. P. W.

I'm growing old; the hopes and fears
That waged an ever-varying strife
No more awaken smiles and tears,
Disturbing my serener life.

The ardent love, the jealous throe,
Which burned and raged without surcease,
Have left me; and a gentler glow
Of sweet contentment brings me peace.

Strong passion owns my reason's sway;
Calm pleasure comes where love's bestowed:
And quiet friendship soothes my way
Along life's peaceful autumn road.

No unknown future threatens ill;
No fierce ambition drives me on;
I gaze from life's sublimest hill
On dangers past and victories won.

What though my natural powers decay—
My lessening time makes less demand:
The labor done, at close of day
The farmer resting views his land,

And sees the harvest waving fair,
The ridgy rows with plenty filled;
Sees fruitful fields erst barrens bare,
The barrens bare his hands have tilled.

So looks life's landscape to my eyes;
My earthly work is nearly done,
A calm comes to me from the skies,
As slowly sinks life's setting sun.

A Bitter Reckoning.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BY CROOKED PATHS," "BRED IN THE BONE," "CROSS PURPOSES," ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.—(CONTINUED.)

I THINK you have written too much, my dear; you look quite fagged," Mrs. Sefton remarked, as she dropped the notes into a post-bag. "If I were you, I should take a good rest after luncheon, or you will not be fit to entertain your country neighbors this evening."

"That is sound advice, and I will follow it. It is such a bore to be compelled to entertain folk that one does not care for."

She turned to Jack as Mrs. Sefton left the room with the bag.

"That is one of the duties that I shall so gladly hand over to you by-and-by."

Jack was throwing the scraps of torn paper into the waste-paper basket, and did not answer.

For a moment she looked surprised, then her face darkened, and she left the room abruptly. She had fancied all the morning that she had detected a coldness on Jack's part, and had thrown out this allusion to their future relations as a feeler. The result had realized her worst fears, and she locked herself in her dressing-room in utter despair.

"So I shall lose him, after all, if I cannot satisfactorily explain this morning's fright! He will not allow a secret between us. What can I do? If I concoct a lie to account for it. Who can want to find Geoffrey Malling after allowing me undisputed possession for the last six years? If they find him, they will tell all, and he will claim his inheritance; they cannot want him for anything else. I must discover how much they know, or how can I fight them? I can't trust another; I must do it myself;" and, with these thoughts running through her mind, she crossed to the bell, which Babette promptly answered. "Babette, I want to run up to London this afternoon, and I don't want anyone to know about it."

Babette's eyes flashed with a quick glance of intelligence; but her lids drooped instantly, and she answered meekly—

"Certainly, mademoiselle."

"If the people see the brougham leaving the house, it will set them wondering; so I want you to run down to the village during luncheon and bring back one of the public flies from the inn there. Tell the man to drive to the stable-yard—in fact, you can come back in it; and let it be there by a quarter-past three."

"Very good, mademoiselle."

"Are your boots thick; and your cloak, is it waterproof?"

"Mademoiselle is very good to think of such things. I shall be all right."

"There is the luncheon-bell. Don't talk about it among the servants; and don't be later than a quarter-past three."

Babette's face gleamed with cruel delight behind Pauline's back as she quietly left the room.

"So you can think about Babette's boots and cloak when it is to serve your own purpose! And you think you have only to go to Messieurs Daws and Raven and show your pretty face, and maybe a ten-pound note or so, and they will tell you all about the person who sent them that advertisement! But you do not outwit a Frenchwoman so simply, my good friend! Mr. Daws is quite prepared to receive you with politeness, and to tell you that he really knows nothing more than that his client, whom he is not at liberty to name, is anxious to obtain the address of the present Sir Geoffrey;" and the girl chuckled grimly as she went along. "That old Daws will hardly risk losing his share of the plunder, even to oblige so sweet, so handsome, so soft-voiced a lady, madame"—and she laughed again as she pictured the meeting between her mistress and the lawyer. "I wished I could be there to see!"

Pauline stopped to speak to Jack as they crossed the hall after luncheon.

"I shall lie down for the whole afternoon; my head is aching so dreadfully. What will you do with yourself, Jack? A wet day is such a terrible infliction in a country-house!"

"I shall work," Jack answered. "It is a week to-day since I touched a brush; it will be a grand opportunity."

"Where shall you be?"

"In the picture-gallery. It will be quieter there than down-stairs."

"If I feel better, I will come to you there by-and-by."

"I should rather advise your taking a good rest while you can get it," Jack responded, in a matter-of-fact tone.

Pauline set her teeth in her under-lip and left him, her mind racked with anxiety and fear.

"At all costs I must be in a position to tell him something that will not be contradicted. I must find out how much those people know before to-night."

* * * * * *

Pauline made an effort to look unlike herself; but here was an individuality not easily hidden under a large plaid traveling-wrap and a plain black bonnet and veil.

At any rate, Mr. Daws was not deceived by them, and guessed who his visitor was the moment she was shown into his dusty little private office.

Pauline's spirits rose wonderfully as she saw how shabby was the little place in which these people carried on their business. She decided that she would first find out how much they knew that she wished unknown, then their object in advertising for Geoffrey Malling; and, if it should be detrimental to her interests, then she would buy them over—dazzle these poor little grubbers by the offer of five hundred pounds.

She forgot that Messrs. Daws and Raven were probably not the first movers in the matter, and that, if they failed towards their client, others would be found to take their place. All she thought of just then was the danger of losing Jack's love. If she could only defer this hidden enemy's action until she was his wife, she would chance the rest.

She looked at the little man who rose from his writing on her entrance, and her spirits fell again. This shabby person with the iron-gray hair sticking all ways at once, the bushy eyebrows, broad mouth, square chin, and generally unwashed, unbrushed appearance had a natural air of antagonism about him. Pauline felt depressed as she seated herself in the chair placed for her by the office boy.

Mr. Daws remained standing, silent and motionless, with his bright bead-like eyes watching her from under his heavy brows until she felt almost hysterical.

She plucked at the fringe of her heavy shawl, cleared her throat once or twice, regained her self possession with an effort, and looked the hideous little man in the face as she spoke.

"I have come with reference to an advertisement in this morning's *Times*."

She paused, hoping he would say something that might give her an opening. The little man jerked his head abruptly, but made no remark.

"I believe you inserted it?" Pauline added.

"No." The syllable sounded sharp and clear.

"No?" She looked incredulous for a moment, then said, "Then, if you did not, you know who did."

Mr. Daws jerked his head again.

"And you will favor me with their address."

"What for?"

"I wish to see them."

"Why?"

"Why!" Pauline drew herself up proudly, for she was getting irritated, as she answered. "I think that is my business."

"Not at all! It is ours."

She was just on the point of rising and leaving the office in dignified silence, when she remembered that, if she lost that chance of finding out the real meaning of the advertisement, she might not have another.

"You will surely not refuse to let me have the address of the person who put that notice in this morning's *Times*, when I tell you that I came on Sir Geoffrey's behalf? I am, in fact, a relative of his."

"What relative?"

"His niece."

"He hasn't a niece."

Without apparently noticing the assertion of the lawyer, Pauline shifted her ground.

"What is the object of the advertisement?" she asked.

"You've read it, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Then you know."

"It says it is for Sir Geoffrey's 'decided advantage.' But how?"

"That's my client's business."

"Don't you know?"

"Lawyers never reveal their clients' affairs."

"But, if you will neither tell me yourself nor give me your client's address, how can I find out for Sir Geoffrey what the advantage is?"

"Send him here himself."

This was just what Pauline dreaded.

"He can't come. He's very ill," she told the lawyer.

"Then we must wait until he's well."

"You will absolutely tell nobody but himself what this wonderful advantage is?"

"No one."

Pauline rose from her chair; and they looked steadily at each other for a few seconds. She gathered her energies for her last effort. She placed her hand on the table between them, and leaned forward slightly.

"What is your price for the address I want?"

Daws' eyes glittered. Two thoughts passed through his mind before he answered—

"You have shown your fear by the offer of a bribe; and Heaven save the Frenchwoman if I betray her, for you will certainly murder her!"

Then he spoke.

"The information you ask for is priceless."

"I can give more than you think perhaps. One hundred pounds!" A pause. "Two hundred—three hundred—four hundred—five!"

"I have answered; it is priceless."

She looked for one instant as if she would spring on him and tear the secret from him; then there came the sullen look of one beaten and baffled, and she turned without another word, went down the rickety stairs, and re-entered the cab which had been waiting for her.

The little lawyer stood still for a minute, listening to the creaking of the stairs under her tread; then he turned and opened a door behind him, and from a dark closet emerged a human being even more unwashed and unbrushed than himself.

The two men looked at each other for a moment; then, moved by a common feeling they broke out into peals of harsh laughter. They laughed loud and long, until, absolutely breathless, they sank into their chairs. Then the dirtier of the two leaned over and shook Daws' hand heartily.

"You're right, Raven. We can shake hands with ourselves. Our case is a better one than I thought. By Jove, you should have seen her face when I said Sir Geoffrey had no niece! She came to pump, did she? Well, she found the pump dry!"

And they laughed again, until the boy in the outer room wondered what piece of villany was being concocted to make his masters so unusually merry.

* * * * * *

Pauline had counted confidentially on making a bargain with Messrs. Daws and Raven. She believed that some unknown person had accidentally found out certain facts of her past life which she had pressing reasons for keeping secret, and she thought she had only to offer them a good price for their silence and the matter would end there, as no doubt the first and last object of the advertisement was money. Now that she was once more in her own room, wrapped in a warm dressing-gown, and with leisure to think, she began to see that there was something more than the mere greed of gain prompting her unknown adversary, and she could not make the vaguest guess at the real motive.

This fighting in the dark was alarming. If she only knew from what quarter to expect the attack, she might be able to make some sort of resistence; as it was, there was nothing to be done but to sit down and calmly await the onslaught.

On one point only could she make up her mind—she must hurry on her marriage. Let her once be Jack's wife, and, no matter what phantoms should rise from the past to threaten her, she would at least be sure of his love; for she would love him so dearly, she would be so gentle, so winning, that he would not be able to withhold his love from her, even though he should grieve to find her other than he had thought.

Still she would make one more effort to unmask this hidden enemy; and, with this intention, she called Babette to her.

"Can I trust you in a matter that is almost life or death to me, Babette? If I employ you to find out a secret for me, will you keep the secret when it is found out? Will you serve me faithfully?"

"The interests of mademoiselle shall be almost as my own."

Pauline looked at her keenly for a moment; her instinct told her that she was not acting wisely in trusting this woman; yet what could she do?

Babette's face was absolutely impassive as she stood waiting.

"I suppose all the servants have seen the advertisement headed 'Mallingford Park' in to-day's *Times*?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"And what do they say about it?"

"Some of them—Mrs. Perkins among others—believe that somebody has found a will of the late Sir Paul's of a later date than the recognized one, in which he forgives his brother and then makes him his heir."

Pauline looked relieved.

"And what is your opinion, Babette?"

"Mine, mademoiselle? I have none. It does not interest me—your English law; I trouble not myself about it."

"Do you know what I think, Babette?"

"No. How should I, mademoiselle?"

"I will tell you. When I was young, very young, I made a fool of myself—never mind how; but I did something that, if it were known now, would do me a great deal of harm. I believe that some one has found out this folly of mine, and is trying to discover Sir Geoffrey Malling's address in the hope that he will assist to secure my downfall. I would give twenty pounds to find out how much or how little this person knows of my folly, and I would give fifty pounds to any one who would bring me face to face with him."

Pauline paused; but the Frenchwoman did not raise her eyes from the ground, lest they might betray her.

"I understand," she said quietly.

"Now will you try to find out who this is, and the extent and knowledge possessed?"

"But how shall I begin, mademoiselle?"

"Go to these lawyers to-morrow—see them yourself—try to get the advertiser's address from them; failing that, try to worm out the nature of the promised advantage to Sir Geoffrey and the means by which it is to be obtained."

"I fear I shall come back no wiser than I go; lawyers are too clever—they will know what I want. But I will go and do what I can."

Pauline unlocked the bronze box—the key had been found on the staircase on the morning following its loss—and took out four five-pound notes.

"Use the money carefully, or they may guess you are not doing this for yourself; and start as early as possible—I want you to be there before Sir Geoffrey. Now make me look as well as you can—I feel awfully *passee* with all this anxiety."

In spite of all Babette's skilful touches, Miss Malling was not her usual brilliant self in appearance that evening. Jack saw it at once; and, though unsuspicious he could not help connecting her nervous anxious manner with the much-talked-of advertisement.

"And so you really know nothing about it?" deaf old Lady Ballard was saying, when Jack entered the drawing-room, with the rest of the men, after dinner. "Well, that's curious! Sir Thomas and I both thought, when we read it, that you were going to be generous, and hand over half the estate to your badly-treated uncle the moment you attained your twenty-fifth birthday."

Miss Malling's guests found the evening unaccountably dull; and one and all heard the announcement of their carriages with evident relief.

Jack felt curiously out of sorts; but he would not admit even to himself that it was his growing doubt of Pauline that was turning everything the seamy side out. Bertha Collins was tired, and, with her usual candor, she announced the fact.

"You are tired too, Pauline, I can see. Thank goodness I'm not a large landed proprietor! I could never sacrifice my feelings to the duties of my position, as you do, and entertain those poor old fossils. Good night, good people! Will you light my candle, Mr. Dornton?"

In the general break up Pauline managed to whisper in Jack's ear—

"I have something to say to you. Wait in the boudoir."

Jack's look conveyed the answer she required, while his heart lightened.

"She is going to tell me the cause of her fright this morning; and I shall be ready to beg her pardon on my knees for doubting her," he thought.

It was rather a shock to him when Pauline joined him presently, locked the door, and, walking straight up to him, said—

"Do you remember my surprise when you fixed the last day of September for our wedding? Well, I have altered my mind. I want you to make me your wife on the very day after my twenty-fifth birthday. That will be on the eighteenth—this day fortnight. Will you?"

Jack looked down at Pauline, and wondered why he did not feel madly overjoyed—as he would have felt a fortnight ago—at her proposal. He was puzzled by his own want of enthusiasm in the matter.

"You will tell me your reason for wishing this," he said; and while he spoke he formed the idea, that it was in some way connected with her fear about the advertisement.

"I have no particular reason that I can give you. It is cruel to ask me for a reason. You will ask me next to give you a reason for loving you. I think it is because my heart hungers to have some one belonging to me and to belong to some one. Mine has been such a lonely life, Jack."

"Very well, dear. It shall be as you wish. Now I think you had better go to bed. You look quite worn out."

"Kiss me, Jack!"

The humble tone touched him, and he felt that he was not behaving well. He took her in his strong arms, saying solemnly as he did so—

"Heaven bless you, dear! I hope we shall neither of us ever have cause to regret marrying in haste."

He stood just where she left him, absorbed in deep thought for some minutes. He half convinced himself that he did not want to marry Miss Malling at all; yet he did not know what had caused the change in his feelings. Try as he would, he could not recall any single action of hers that had caused this alteration in him.

"After asking a woman to be my wife, I can't suddenly refuse to marry her because she goes white over a mysterious advertisement; nor can I throw her over because she is so awfully fond of me. After all, I believe there is such a thing—and that is that I am bad at heart; and the only thing for me to do is to get married with the best grace I can. All the same, I wish I had never seen this place at all!"

Thus he grumbled on his way up to his room, where he sat far on into the morning marvelling how he could for a moment have put Pauline before his little Ethel.

CHAPTER IX.

ETHEL was certainly very courageous! She was also strong, young, and healthy, and had an unusual amount of self-pride, all of which kept her from giving way under the load of grief that came upon her after Jack's faithless behavior. But she felt her sorrow none the less deeply because she held it resolutely in check and hid it from her father's sight.

Just now her life looked very gray, for Captain Pelling had been compelled, sorely against his will, to pay a long-promised visit to an old friend; and Ethel was surprised to find how much she missed him. His unobtrusive kindness and bright good nature had often driven away the memory of Jack's cruelty; and, without making it a personal matter, he had managed to give a new turn to her thoughts by claiming her interest in the much-talked-of work on Central Africa.

Now there were no morning-calls from him, no evening-visits to the Wigwam, no business-interviews with the publishers—in which her opinion was asked and deferred to in the matter of illustrations—to take her thoughts away from the one all-engrossing subject, and she began to think life was a huge mistake, and to wish herself well out of it, arguing foolishly that, because the clouds were dark and heavy above her just now, the future had no bright sunshine in store.

Captain Pelling had been away nearly a week, and Ethel was feeling the daily monotony of her life very irksome as she once more set about making her father's coffee—a task she dared not trust to another.

There were letters on the table, but she did not feel particularly curious about them. She saw two thick square yellow envelop and concluded that they contained cards of invitation to some art-conversazione. This was a form of amusement she did not care for; but her father enjoyed meeting people whose tastes corresponded with his own, and therefore they nearly always accepted such invitations. As she placed the coffee-pot on the table, the writing on the envelope next to her own plate caught her eyes. The blood rushed to her face, and with nervous haste she picked up the envelope and opened it. She read the invitation-card, and the flush—was it of hope?—faded slowly, leaving an expression of sorrowful contempt on her face.

"Poor Jack!" she sighed. "I wonder if he thinks a few civilities of this kind will make amends for his conduct in the past? Does he imagine he can repay me for the loss of his love by holding out the hand of friendly patronage? Can he believe it would give me pleasure to spend an evening in watching his attentions to his handsome hostess, to see his adoring eyes following her the whole night through?"

She threw the card from her with an impatient sigh.

"How foolish—how contemptibly foolish it is of me to care so much after all this time! Perhaps the dad would like to see his old home again; and, as it does not really matter much whether I go or not, I will do as he wishes about it."

As she heard her father's step on the stairs, she turned as brightly as usual towards him to say—

"Good morning."

Then she held his envelope behind her playfully, saying—

"A thousand guesses, and you will not guess where this letter is from, papa!"

"I shall not make one—so tell me."

"It is an invitation to Mallingford for the seventeenth of this month."

Mr. Mallett's face darkened with a sudden dread.

"To Mallingford? From Lord Summers, is it?"

"No, from Miss Malling herself, for a ball."

"A ball!" he repeated. "Why in the world should Miss Malling invite me to a ball?"

He looked at the envelope curiously, and then said—

"It is addressed to 'G. Mallett, Esq.,' and in Jack Dornton's writing! Oh, I begin to understand!" he went on, in a voice of genuine relief, as he took the card from the envelope. "I feared for the moment that Summers had been doing a kindness, as he calls it, and persuaded Pauline Malling to invite her poor relatives to her *omnium gatherum*. But this civility is evidently due to Dornton's good nature, and is sent in all good faith to 'the Malletts, old friends of mine,' as he would say in describing us."

"Who is Lord Summers, papa?"

"Lord Summers is your cousin's guardian."

"Of course—I remember—the kind-looking old man we met at the Exhibition last May."

"Yes. I've been in constant dread ever since that unfortunate meeting that he would seek me out and try to do something for me. That was why I was so annoyed when you told him you copied in the galleries; I thought he might pounce on you and worm our address out of you."

"He would hardly do that, papa, if he knew you did not wish him to know it."

"My dear, you don't know Summers. He has a reputation for being a kindly old imbecile, and, under cover of his supposed kindness and imbecility, thinks himself privileged to take unpardonable liberties with everybody."

"Do you think he would tell Miss Malling about my copying at the galleries, papa?"

Ethel put the question with a sudden interest."

"No doubt of it; he is an inveterate talker."

Ethel had a sudden conviction that Miss Malling had used this information to obtain their address, if Lord Summers had not, and believed she had at last found out to whom she was indebted for her anonymous letter. This belief did not increase her desire to go to Mallingford; but she held to her resolution to leave the decision in her father's hands.

"Do you think Lord Summers knows that you get your living by giving drawing lessons?"

Mr. Mallett flinched at the question. His old pride of birth and position still clung to him; but he had a still nobler pride.

"If he troubles to think about me at all," he answered—"and most likely he does—he would guess that I did something of the sort, for he always encouraged my daubing in the old days, and he used to say that, if I had been a poor man, I should have been a good artist."

It was so seldom that Mr. Mallett touched on the past, and Ethel was so anxious to know something of it, that she now tried to continue the discussion.

"I should think you were proud not to have to go to your brother for help, dear papa."

His brows contracted and his lips tightened.

"Go to Paul for help! I would have let you and your mother die of slow starvation before I would have gone through such a useless degradation! He would not have given me a crumb from the servants' table!"

"What a terrible disposition! I'm glad you're not like you're brother, dad."

"Well, I think I am in some things. The difference is that I am not so quick to take offence. Let me once feel that I am really wronged, and I am as unforgiving as he was."

"I don't quite believe that."

"Because you've never seen me really annoyed. But now about this invitation. Do you want to go to the ball?"

"I don't care one bit about it, if you don't want to go, dad."

"I don't care about the ball either; but I should like you to see the old place, Ethel. If we were to go to the ball, I should most likely run up against some one who would remember me as Geoffrey Malling, and there would be quite a little sensation over my reappearance; but this invitation entitles us to call on Miss Malling, in any case. Send an acceptance, my dear; we can follow it up by an excuse on the morning of the seventeenth. In the meantime we will run down one day and leave our cards, and take a look round just as ordinary strangers would—and no one will think we are anything else."

"Very well, dad. Aren't you going to read your other letter?"

Ethel was glad the question was settled in this way, for she too wished to see the old house that should in justice have been her father's. Mr. Mallett opened the other letter and threw it across to her.

"Read it out, Ethel. It's from Pelling. I've talked so much that I've no time to eat."

Ethel read the letter, which ran as follows—

"My dear Mallett,—I send some birds by to-night's train—hope they will arrive all right. I am tired of this place, but can't get away under the promised fortnight. My old friend has taken a wife since I last saw him. Said wife has three sisters at present staying with her; and, as they are all of the genus 'blue-stocking,' my life has been a burden to me since my arrival here, by reason of their persevering pursuit of knowledge—African knowledge in particular."

"Pursuit of Pelling's three thousand a year would be nearer the truth," murmured Mr. Mallett in a low voice.

"Sport is excellent," Ethel continued reading, "but just the least bit monotonous. The house is full of pleasant people—and yet I miss your society more than I could have thought possible; and I am really anxious to get back to our work. Tell Miss Malling not to forget her promise——"

"What promise was that?" Mr. Mallett asked with his mouth full.

"I am not quite sure what he means, unless——"

Ethel blushed slightly.

"Never mind; finish the letter to yourself my dear, for I must be off directly."

After seeing her father off, and finishing the letter, Ethel did not feel altogether happy. She was afraid Captain Pelling had set too high a value on her words, and she tried to recall exactly what she had said when he had called to say good-bye. What had really occurred was this. When Ethel put her hand into Pelling's, he held it while he said—

"I wish I could flatter myself by believing you would miss me a little while I am away, Miss Mallet; but perhaps it would be a welcome miss, for I know I'm a terrible bore sometimes."

He looked so wistful that Ethel felt quite a thrill of sympathy for him, and, on the impulse of the moment, responded—

"I'm sure I shall miss you, and I shall be glad to see you back again."

And Pelling had left her with a face so glorified with delight that she had feared and wondered continually what such glorification might mean, and had alternately blamed herself for her impulsive words and him for his misinterpretation of them.

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Pauline was rather staggered a couple of days later when she received affirmative replies from Mr. and Miss Mallett; but she was in such a whirl of excitement by this time that so small a peril as a visit from her uncle and cousin passed by unheeded.

The advertisement had been repeated three times in the *Times*. The last insertion contained an offer of twenty pounds for the present address of "Sir G. M., late of Mallingford."

In her dread of losing Jack, Pauline took this to mean that the advertiser had heard of her approaching marriage, and had offered this reward in order to bring matters to a crisis in time to prevent it.

Since her interview with Jack on the night of her return from town, he had been more tender in his manner towards her; his quiet gentle thoughtfulness had been so much fuel to the flame of her passionate love; she realized that to lose him now would make the rest of her life a blank, and she fought desperately against the fate that seemed to threaten her.

Babette went up to town as arranged, to see Daws and Raven, and came back arching her brows, shrugging her shoulders, and gesticulating freely. All Pauline could get from her was that all lawyers were 'beasts,' and she would not go to be so insulted again for a hundred pounds.

Miss Malling took courage from the fact that her uncle had not yet seen the advertisement, arguing that, if he had not seen it on the first two days of its insertion, the chances were that he did not read the *Times*, and might therefore never see it at all.

But on the other hand, she gauged the determination of her unknown enemy by this offer of twenty pounds for her uncle's address; and her heart sank as she weighed the chances for and against Sir Geoffrey's being brought into contact with this person, who she felt sure held information that would deprive her of position, wealth and lover at one blow.

It was now the eighth of September, and she was to be married on the eighteenth. Babette was the only member of the household who had been taken into her mistress's confidence with regard to her approaching marriage, and the vivacious Frenchwoman was delighted at the prospect of going up to town every day between then and the eighteenth, to see after the piles of new finery indispensable at such a time.

CHAPTER X.

BABETTE sat opposite to Mr. Daws in the grimy dust-eaten den that he dignified by the title of "office." She was in a violent rage. Her eyes flashed, and every now and again her clenched hand came down with a thud on to the table to give point to her already emphatic speech.

"It is now six days that the advertisement has been in your newspaper, and you tell me you have had no answer of any sort in all that time but madame herself? Then I tell you I do not believe you. You have not told me the truth. It is a conspiracy between you and that other little horror of a Raven to keep the affair in your own hands and to do me out of my part. I believe that you have already seen this Sir Geoffrey, and that you have sent him off on a wild-goose chase to search all the graveyards of Spain for the tomb of his niece. For this one time you have been too clever. When I showed you the picture of Pauline Malling's tomb, I did not tell you that, before showing it to you, I had removed the name of the town where it was taken and of the artist who took it. I have the names carefully copied, and I keep them to myself until I can show them to Sir Geoffrey personally. I will not trust my best cards in the hands of such a cheat as you Monsieur Daws!"

The clenched hand came down with the word "cheat," and she leaned a little forward, glaring at the small dirty man who sat curled up in a large arm-chair on the other side of the table.

He listened without moving a muscle. When she paused, he smiled a slow smile of gratification.

"You are about the first client I've ever had do me full justice, and I respect your shrewdness. What a pity such a head-piece

was given to a woman! But you are wrong all the same about our having found Sir Geoffrey. Why don't you carry the thing through yourself? You have the address of the photographer who took that touching little picture of a grave, you say? Well, then, what is more easy than to employ a detective to run over to the place, and gather on the spot from eye-witnesses the particulars of Pauline Malling's death, and also procure the certificate of death. This young woman retires gracefully, and Sir Geoffrey Malling walks into his own."

"But if we could not find him?"

"Bosh! The whole of England will ring with the story. He must hear of it if he's alive."

"What would it cost to send a detective as you say?"

"Well, you would have to put a fifty-pound note in his hand to start with. He would have to pay his way handsomely to get the information wanted."

"I have not so much money in England; I should have to send to France for it. It would take four or five days to get it here, and then it would be too late for one part of my plan. Will you lend me the money?"

"I lend you fifty pounds! You must be mad! I have already granted you five long interviews without charging you a farthing—the first time in my life I ever did such a thing. I give you my advice gratis, in consideration of possible profit in the future; but money is another thing. If we could find Sir Geoffrey, I might advance the money to him; but, until we are sure he is alive and willing to go into the business with us, 'caution' is the word so far as Daws and Raven are concerned."

Babette bit viciously at her lip, and Daws watched her curiously.

"Will you tell me why you are so anxious to hurry the thing on?" he asked presently. "We can always pop on her when we are prepared with our facts. Why not send for the money from France, and wait quietly until your agent returns from Spain loaded with proofs of the imposture? You have the game in your own hand; you can afford to wait."

"And let her marry Monsieur Dornton?"

"Why not. Are you sweet on him yourself?"

She laughed a very shrill laugh of contempt.

"But you are stupid!" she said scornfully.

Then her voice altered to a low hiss, and her face clouded over with hate as she went on, "I will tell you why I wish to stop this marriage—because she—this impostor—loves that young Dornton, loves him better than her own life, better than her position, her riches, everything: because the loss of all the rest would be as nothing to her so long as she could have him for her husband; and because my heart hungers to take from her everything she holds dear. It would be only half a job to take away her possessions; I must rob her of all that makes her life worth living, and then I can die content! For I hate her—hate her—hate her!"

"By Jehoshaphat!" muttered Daws to himself. "And when does this marriage take place?" he asked aloud.

The question recalled Babette to herself, and she came back quite willingly, it seemed from the contemplation of her revenge.

"Ah, that is it," she cried—"that is my despair, my anguish, my misery! The marriage takes place on the eighteenth, and it is already the thirteenth! But five days more, and she will be his wife, and half my revenge will be impossible. I long to make her suffer so much that I swear to you, if my death would prevent the wedding, if I could be sure of it, I would gladly kill myself as I sit here!"

"I'm afraid you'll have to give up that part of your plan and be satisfied with dragging her from her position. Unless Sir Geoffrey turns up to-day, or to-morrow at the latest, we could not get the information we want in time to stop the marriage. I'm sorry to disappoint you; but I think the wedding will have to take place in spite of you, ma'm'selle."

Babette looked worn and fagged when she reached Mallingford about three or four o'clock.

She walked listlessly across the platform to the conveyance in waiting for her—for it was a good five-mile walk from the nearest station to the park—when, just as she was mounting to her seat by the side of the groom, after placing the parcel of costly lace—the object of her journey—in safety, she heard some one behind her asking for a fly to go to Mallingford Park.

She turned to look at the inquirer, and for a moment she stood staring at a tall well-bred-looking man, evidently on the wrong side of fifty, with a sweet-faced girl of eighteen on his arm.

She recognized the girl as the young lady she had followed from the Museum to her home, and whose name she had discovered from the neighboring tradespeople by her mistress's orders about two months before.

Then she remembered posting a letter to this young lady for her mistress, and she recalled having seen Dornton's letter to the same person a few days later, and, in a blind fashion, without knowing why, she connected their appearance at Mallingford with those letters, and a wild hope sprang up in her heart that this elderly aristocrat and his pretty daughter had come to Mallingford to help on her purpose of preventing Miss Mallingford's marriage.

Babette was soon deposited at Mallingford House. She made herself presentable and went down to Miss Malling's boudoir on the ground-floor, on the pretence of discussing her morning's purchases with her mistress, but really with the determination to hang about the neighborhood of the reception-rooms, and witness—if possible, overhear—the interview between Miss Malling and these Malletts.

The windows of the boudoir overlooked a long stretch of the principal drive. When Babette reached the room, it was empty. She placed herself to watch for the arrival of the fly from the village. She saw it come up the long avenue and stop at the main entrance.

Then she went to the hall and busied herself looking for an imaginary missing shawl among the numberless wraps lying about. The hall-porter, for some unknown reason, was not at his post, and an inexperienced footman informed Mr. Mallett that Miss Malling was not at home.

Babette, thinking she saw the chance of help from these people gradually slipping away, came forward boldly.

"Are you sure you are right in denying Miss Malling to this gentleman, Philip?" she asked, in a low voice. "I think you have made a mistake."

The young man bowed to the superior authority of Miss Malling's confidential maid, and left the matter in her hands. Babette turned to Mr. Mallett.

"If you will follow me, monsieur, I will see if Miss Malling has returned from her drive."

She took them to the boudoir, stood for a moment in thought, and then flew off to the picture-gallery. As she expected, she found Jack and Miss Malling in the deep recess of window at the far end. She announced—

"Mr. and Miss Mallett in your boudoir, mademoiselle!"

Pauline sprang from her chair and stood glaring at Babette as if she were a messenger from the other world. The words "Sir Geoffrey" rose to her lips; but she remembered in time that his individuality was not known to any one but herself, and she checked the name with an effort.

"I am not a home," she told her maid. "I left word to that effect."

"Yes, so they said, mademoiselle; but I happened to be in the hall, and I thought I heard the gentleman ask for Monsieur Dornton; so I offered to see if he was in."

Every nerve in Pauline's body was vibrating, and a sense of suffocation came over her. Had this man at last seen the advertisement or been told of it? Perhaps, too, he had been to those dreadful people Daws and Raven, and obtained from them the information that would ruin her. She turned to Jack eagerly.

"Don't see them, Jack!" she said pleadingly. "They will keep you all the afternoon, and we are so comfortable."

Jack felt that his position was hardly pleasant. If they had asked for him, he ought to go to them. But still he admitted that Pauline's objection was quite natural. He could understand her wish that he should not meet Ethel more than was necessary.

"Very well," he acquiesced. "Not at home, Babette."

The Frenchwoman retraced her steps down the long gallery with a look of deep disappointment on her face. She had expected so much from the appearance of those people.

She had built on the abrupt termination of this hateful engagement through them, and now the chance was lost, utterly lost, just because she could not bring about the desired interview.

This disappointment, coming after her morning's failure at Daw's office, broke down her spirit altogether, and for the first time she began to believe that she must resign herself to the inevitable—that the marriage could not be prevented, and she must be satisfied with the poor revenge of depriving Pauline of her unlawful possessions.

She clenched her teeth with defeated rage as she entered the boudoir.

"No, madame has not yet returned," she said, and held the door for them to pass out into the gallery.

But in that moment of her utter despair the tide turned and carried her on to speedy victory. She preceded Mr. and Miss Mallett until they reached the central hall, and then handed them over to the footman. She stood watching them as they re-entered the hired carriage.

As they drove off, some one plucked at her from behind. She turned round in surprise, to meet Mrs. Perkins, whom she had passed in the corridor, outside the boudoir, superintending the arranging of fresh flowers in the window-stand. The housekeeper's usually florid face was quite pale, and she jerked out her words in a curious breathless way.

"Who are those people you have just shown out?"

"Mr. and Miss Mallett."

"They are nothing of the kind! The gentleman is Sir Geoffrey Malling, Baronet, brother to Sir Paul and uncle to our present mistress, and the young lady is like enough to the family to be his daughter."

"Mon Dieu! But are you certain?"

"As certain as that I am Caroline Perkins."

The Frenchwoman stood looking at her with a gigantic triumph in her face as she muttered—

"At last—at last!"

CHAPTER XI.

WILL Mr. Mallett call on Messrs. Daws and Raven at their offices, 16 Lomax Street, E.C., between two and three o'clock? They have private information of the greatest value to impart to him."

Ethel leaned over her father's shoulder and read the telegram.

"What can it mean, papa? It's very mysterious. Shall you go?"

"I think so. I can do no harm by going, if I do no good."

"I wish you would take me with you. I shall be in such a state of excitement until you come back."

"I could not think of taking you to a place, I know nothing of, my dear. It might be very inconvenient to have you with me."

"Of course! I was only joking with you dear."

Mr. Mallett turned the telegram and the envelope over and over; but there was no further information of any sort to be gained from them.

Ethel looked across at him in great surprise.

"Why, papa, I believe you are excited and curious! It is the first time I ever saw you so interested."

"Yes, I am curious. It strikes me as odd that, after living an uneventful life for the last twenty years, I should one day break my vow as to never revisiting Mallingford Park, unless as its owner, and the next day receive this curious message. I daresay it is only a coincidence; but still it is strange, and I can't help connecting the one event with the other."

Mr. Mallett's pupils were more than once surprised during that morning by a joke from their drawing-master. The usually impassive methodical teacher of tone and perspective, whose remarks had never strayed for one moment from the purpose of his visits within the recollection of his oldest pupil, entered the room to-day with a smile, enlivened the usually silent lesson with amusing criticisms on the students' efforts, and left with a frivolous remark that set the whole class in a roar.

And Mr. Mallett walked off to his next lesson with a more erect carriage and a firmer tread than had been habitual to him for ten years past.

Again and again he had chidden himself for the strange elation that had taken possession of him.

Again and again he tried to reason himself out of the childish belief that some great good fortune was coming upon him. The belief had fixed itself in his mind, and not all the calm reasoning in the world would displace it.

Surely there was some strangely exhilarating quality in the atmosphere this morning, for Ethel too went about her business in a brisker manner than she had lately.

Her nerves were a little bit unstrung too, for, when about three o'clock there came a very decided rat-a-tat-tat at the door, she was worked up to such a state of extreme expectation that she almost shrieked aloud. She ran to her usual post of observation, the stair-head, and was surprised, pleased, sorry, disturbed, all in a moment, at the sight of Captain Pelling.

In the engrossing excitement caused by the morning's telegram they had quite forgotten he was to return to-day.

"If Miss Mallett is engaged, I will not come up, as Mr. Mallett is not in. Will you let her know I'm here, and say I will not intrude if she is busy?" he was saying as she leaned over the baluster.

There was something in his speech which struck Ethel as unusual—want of confidence, an irresolution very unlike his general hearty straightforward style. She wondered what it could mean, and a feeling of shyness as to meeting him came over her. She was almost tempted to send him a message to the effect that she could not see him just then; but she had a horror of deception, and indeed she was really glad to see him again.

A few seconds later she was shaking hands with him, and her shyness had completely vanished. He looked at her attentively, and then remarked—

"How well you look!"

"Your tone almost implies that you are more surprised than pleased," Ethel pleasantly laughed.

He looked rather disturbed at such a construction being placed upon his words.

"Indeed no; I am really glad to see you so improved. But I thought perhaps you had felt the relief of my absence, that that was the reason of the change, and the thought was not very flattering to my self-love."

Ethel had reasons for not wishing him to know how she had missed him, for she feared he might put a higher value on the fact than it was worth, so she carefully avoided making the answer he wished.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

GARDENING FOR WOMEN.—There is nothing better for wives and daughters physically than to have the care of a garden: a flower pot if nothing more. What is pleasanter than to spend a portion of every passing day in working among plants and watching the growth of shrubs and trees and plants, and to observe the opening of flowers from week to week as the season advances? Then how much it adds to the enjoyment to know that your own hands have planted and tilled them and have pruned and trained them—this is a pleasure that requires neither great riches nor profound knowledge. The humble cottage of the laboring poor not less than the grounds of the rich may be adorned with plants, which in due time will become redolent of perfume, not less than radiant with beauty, thus ministering to the love of the beautiful in nature.

A JUROR at Cumberland, Md., the other day hung his coat over one of the heaters in the court-room. When he put it on after adjournment he discovered that some apples he had in his coat pockets were roasted.

Bric-a-Brac.

SHAKSPEARE'S HAND.—There are only five genuine signatures of Shakspeare known to be in existence. One is in the London library, the other in the British Museum, one attached to his will at Doctor's Commons, and two in possession of private persons. It is said that even in these he spells his own name in two or three different ways.

JAPANESE EXECUTION.—A most curious and brutal method of executing criminals is said to be practiced in Japan. The criminal is required to stand under a post, upon which there is a crossbar, with his hands upon the latter. While in this position bamboo rods are thrust into both sides of his body between the arm pits and the hip, special care being taken not to touch a vital part. In this condition the prisoner is left until death, which generally ensues a few hours later. The longer it takes the criminal to die the better it is for the executioner, for upon it depends his reputation.

CLERICAL BLACK.—In the year 1524 Martin Luther laid aside the monk's costume, and henceforward dressed according to the fashion of the world. He chose black clothes, and consequently the color has become the fashion of the clergy. His reason for choosing this color was—the Electors of Saxony took an interest in him, and now and then sent him a piece of black cloth, being at that time the court fashion, and because Luther preferred it; so his scholars thought it became them to wear the same color as their master. From that time black has been the color mostly worn by the clergy.

WONDERFUL SLIGHT-OF-HAND.—One of the tricks of a French prestidigitateur is a surprising illusion. A wedding-ring borrowed from a lady is hammered into a bar by some volunteer assistant among the audience. The conjuror borrows a programme, rolls it into a cornucopia-shaped receptacle for the ring, and without the use of the left hand crumples the paper into a ball, which the volunteer holds tight, full in view of the audience. When he is directed to open it he finds that the crumpled ball of paper consists of five sealed envelopes, one within the other, and with the perfect wedding-ring in the smallest and innermost.

DRAWING THE BADGER.—Badger-baiting was a brutal sport at one time in vogue in England as a kind of "attraction" in public-houses of the lowest class. The animal was kept in a tub or barrel and was attacked by dogs. Yielding at last to superior numbers, it was dragged or drawn out. The badger was then set free and permitted to go in its tub till it recovered from the effects of the struggle, after which it was again baited. It had to submit to this barbarous treatment several times a day. The verb "to badger," now often applied to persons, was originally used in direct reference to this cruel practice. The dog called the Dachshund was the favorite for badgering purposes.

THE DAHLIA.—The dahlia, after having been unfashionable for many years, has of late again gained many friends, who will no doubt be interested to learn that this flower might this year celebrate the centenary of its introduction into Europe. In 1785 the Spaniard Cervantes found a new plant in Mexico with small red, violet, or orange flowers around a large yellow centre, growing on a long thin stock. He sent a specimen to the director of the Botanical Gardens at Madrid, who gave the flower its present name. From Spain the dahlia was exported all over Europe. For the first thirty years it was cultivated in England in a greater variety than in any other country, but later on Germany has taken the first place for the culture of dahlias.

A PAINTER'S INDUSTRY.—Apelles was the greatest artist of old times. His industry was such that he never allowed a day to pass without painting one line—a habit which has become proverbial in the phase, "No day without a line" Apelles was not above criticism. When his paintings were exposed to the public view, it is said that he used to conceal himself near them so that he might hear the comments of onlookers. A cobbler finding fault with the shoe of one of his figures, Apelles at once corrected it. But next day when the cobbler ventured to criticise the legs, the painter came forth from his hiding-place and recommended the cobbler to stick to the shoes—advice which in the words of the modern version of the story also has been been adopted as a proverb, "Let not the shoemaker overstep his last."

THE GREEK IDEA OF DEATH.—A Greek peasant looks upon death quite differently from what a person of the western world is taught to believe. To him it is the end of all joy and gladness; the songs over his body speak of the black earth, the end of light and brilliancy. A popular modern Greek song on death when read by the side of Sophocles' description of the death of Ajax, shows how curiously alike are the ideas of death as painted in the two poems. Charon is still believed to be a white haired old man with long and fearful nails and in lamentations, which are still of every-day occurrence in the islands, you actually hear of Charon's boat. He is now spoken of as Chaos. In some parts of Greece they still, it is said, put money in the mouth of a deceased person to pay the passage. At the funeral of a child in a mountain village of Naxos a wax cross was put in the child's mouth by the priest, and on inquiry the writer was told that it was the freight money, so completely has the Greek church incorporated into itself the ancient ideas.

ONWARD.

BY ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.

Nothing resting in its own completeness
Can have youth or beauty, but alone
Because it leads and tends to further sweetness,
Fuller, higher, deeper than its own.

Spring's real glory dwells not in the meaning,
Gracious though it be, of her blue hours,
But is hidden in her slender leaning
To the Summer's richer wealth of flowers.

Dawn is fair because the mists fade slowly
Into day, which floods the world with light;
Twilight's mystery is so sweet and holy
Just because it ends in starry night.

Life is only bright when it proceedeth
Towards a truer, deeper life above;
Human love is sweetest when it leadeth
To a more divine and perfect love.

Learn the mystery of progression duly;
Do not call each glorious change decay;
But we know we only hold our treasures truly
When it seems as if they pass away.

Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness;
In that want their beauty lies; they roll
Toward some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward man's reluctant soul.

THE Mystery of Glenorris

BY MARY CECIL HAY.

AUTHORESS OF "NORA'S LOVE-TEST," "OLD MYDDLETON'S MONEY," "FOR HER DEAR SAKE," "DOROTHY'S VENTURE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXV—(CONTINUED.)

BUT have you thought this over, my dear Miss Glenorris?" inquired Norman, with an anxious interest in his quiet tones. "If not, it would be wise to do so before acting. I fear it is the truth which we have most to fear. If what we know already condemns him, more will only make bad worse—for instance, there is that ugly fact of the silk handkerchief."

"That is all accounted for!" cried Joy. "I saw it in Miss Porch's possession before that night; Mr. Lester tied it on when he found her walking in her sleep."

"In her sleep!"

Mr. Pardy echoed the words with a laugh of ready incredulity which jarred so terribly on the girl's highly-strung nerves that she failed to detect the alarm, as well as astonishment, her words had aroused in him.

"I fear that when Mr. Lester offers that vision to the public," he said presently, the scarlet flame which had spread so tardily over his smooth forehead dying as tardily, "they will do him the injustice to reject it."

"He will offer no version to the public," the girl declared.

"Is he so timidly unwilling to rebut your evidence?" inquired Norman. "Oh, really, Miss Glenorris, we must try to arrange things in such a way as for there to be no difficulty about that! If he desires to announce his own version of the affair——"

"I shall arrange that," the girl answered, with a confidence which seemed rather pathetic to the man who understood so much better than she did the weight of legal evidence.

"I am quite certain you will do all in your power," he hastened to say, with mild leniency; "but will Mr. Lester afford you the opportunity—voluntarily, I mean?—for, in the cruel event of justice overtaking him, all will be done independent of his volition. But why," Norman added politely, not pretending to see her shrinking gesture, "should you fear further inquiry? Your evidence proved Mortimer's words a lie, Miss Glenorris. Why should you fear to have to repeat it. And pray," he went on, in her silence, "do not be depressed by the somewhat painful recollection of how often Mr. Lester spoke intimately of Miss Porch to you."

"If he did so, it was never in your presence, Mr. Pardy," said the girl, her heart sinking with the keen memory of Gervys Lester's advice to her to avoid Agatha Porch and the vain regret that she had not done so. "If you think he did, you must have imbibed suspicion from Miss Porch herself, and, if you repeat it, you must confess why she made you her confidant. If she told you she suspected Mr. Lester spoke unfavorably of her she must have given you a reason for her suspicion."

"I fear, Miss Glenorris," Mr. Pardy answered, with his forbearing smile, "that you know already why Mr. Lester had that fatal aversion to Miss Porch."

"Indeed I do not!" she cried, with the earnest simplicity of perfect truth.

"Do you not guess that she knew a secret of his?"

"Did she?"

"You well know that Mr. Lester had a secret?"

"So have I—and you."

"Suppose," said Norman tentatively, "that he dreaded Agatha Porch's access to you, lest she might divulge his secret to you, whose good graces he of course desired though he was only a tenant on your estate."

The girl's laugh was so free and sweet that Norman bit his lip in vexation. Had he, by this bold attempt to win the truth by guessing, missed the something which she surely must have expected—else why that irresistible laugh in the reaction of her fear.

"Excuse that laugh," she said, misinterpreting his frown; "but the thought of Mr. Lester's having any fear about my being told a secret of his by Miss Porch is comic; so is the notion of Miss Porch's being likely to know his secrets. I think"—with a cold smile—"the idea is rather beneath your powers, Mr. Pardy. Now I must ask you to excuse me. I want to turn here to the vineries."

Every vestige of the smile, cold as it was, had left her lips a moment after she and Mr. Pardy had separated; and she went along the path beside the line of her glass-houses without attempting to enter one, the old thought oppressing her.

Why was it that Gervys Lester had entreated her to let Mr. Johnson dismiss those sisters from her house? Why had he warned her against Agatha Porch, whom yet he had pitied, for had he not one day said it might save her life to leave the Moat?

Ah, how true that was! But why had he wished her to go? Did he dread the pursuit of a will which should rob Joy of her property?

"No, no!" cried the girl, in her quick loyal thoughts. "In every case, whatever the result, he would wish justice done. If he had believed there was a will lying undiscovered at Merlswood, he would have put no obstacle in the way of its being brought to light."

"He loved justice; and there would be no justice in my holding this property if it had been bequeathed to some one else. No, it could not have been that; besides, he told me that no will existed which could hurt me. How confidently he said it! No; the wealth is all mine alone—mine!" she repeated, with a sudden flush and a bright excitement in the wistful eyes. "How very good that certainty is now that I want money for one purpose, and rejoice in it for what it will bring me—some day!"

Yet, while exulting in her possessions, she entered her beautiful house with a lagging step. What joy or happiness had ever awaited her within its walls? And to-day that coming interview with Mrs. Fears-Kienon loomed very unpleasantly before her.

But, when Roland told her Mr. Johnson awaited her in the library, she quickened her pace gladly. She thoroughly liked and respected her agent, and it was always a real pleasure to the lonely girl—who longed to do rightly all she did—to see and speak with him; so Mr. Johnson did not miss today the smile with which she always greeted him.

As usual, she began to talk brightly on ordinary topics, with no apparent recollection of business relations between them, and, also as usual, he took the earliest opportunity of bringing his business forward, as if to keep before his own mind what she might forget.

"I came to tell you, Miss Glenorris, of a letter I have just received from Mr. Lester of the Glen Farm. Will you kindly look at it? He has gone away for a time, but considers his bailiff fully competent to manage everything in his absence. He gives us no address, and no information as to the period of his absence."

"He intends to stay a long time, I suppose?"

"I should fancy so by the tone of his letter. I sadly fear the harassing and hampering consciousness of being watched has set him against this neighborhood; and indeed it is but natural."

"When was the letter written?" asked Miss Glenorris.

"Yesterday evening. I went to the farm at once on receiving it to-day, and learnt there that Mr. Lester's preparations were all made yesterday afternoon before he wrote, and that he left this morning."

"But," said Joy, in sudden fear, "if he has been watched, as you say, has he been followed?"

"That question struck me at once, Miss Glenorris; but I can by chance answer it satisfactorily. I believe that the detective who was idling about here was recalled to London yesterday to identify some man, and has not yet returned. I feel sure Mr. Lester didn't know—indeed I only found out by having cultivated the man for purposes of my own—and it is doubtful in my mind whether Mr. Lester even knew of the man's vicinity and mission. Probably it would have made no difference to him if he had, for he has acted independently throughout. Miss Glenorris, even if we guess where he is, we of course shall not know."

Joy gave her agent a rather wise little smile, understanding him quite well.

"I have not the faintest guess," she said; but, all the same, she thanked Mr. Johnson in her heart that he had not asked her whether she had, and had, in his quiet warning, said "we," instead of "I."

Minute after minute he dallied, racking his brain for little items of business to warrant his delay, and greedily accepting every excuse she offered him, for he hated to leave her with this strange and odd atmosphere of loneliness surrounding her.

After his departure, she stood just where he had left her, in a dream as it were, leaning against the side of the great arm-chair upon the rug; and at last her face went down upon her hands on the back of this high chair in which the old Squire had spent so many of his dull hours.

It was while she stood thus that the door was opened to admit Mrs. Kienon's ample form and rustling skirts.

"My dear Joy," she cried, starting back, "have I come inopportunely? I am so sorry! After you went out, dear, I was told you desired a little conversation with Kate; and I have come to officiate in her stead, to render any service in my power to you, dear, in her absence."

"I had forgotten," said the girl, seating herself upon the arm of the great chair, and folding her hands over the back, knowing she needed this support, and determined to betray no emotion in the presence of Kate's mother. "Yes, I want to speak to Kate. Where is she?"

"That is what I came to tell you, dear. She has gone to town."

"Gone to London?" echoed Joy, most naturally amazed.

"Yes, my dear. She has gone for a little time to a friend in town."

"She went," the girl said, in proud and quiet tones, "because I asked to speak with her."

"Oh, no—oh, dear no!" cried Mrs. Kienon, with the slow shrug her daughter had inherited. "That was the plea she urged with me for postponing her departure until your return; but I offered to represent her and to be as useful as I could——"

"I understand," interpolated Joy. "You would excuse her at all costs; but she went so suddenly because she guessed that I was going to tell her she either must go from my house or never mention here—or meet from here—her—the man she married. Well, it is only another—— Where is Anne?"

"You are quite mistaken in Kate, indeed, my dear," observed Mrs. Kienon blandly. "She is too fond of Merlswood, and of you."

"Where is Anne?" repeated Miss Glenorris.

"Oh, Anne," said Mrs. Kienon slightingly, "has of course accompanied her sister! Kate could not go alone—— Do not curl your lip, dear; it is unbecoming in so young a girl. There was only Anne to go, and of course I resigned her. My duty was to remain with you; and duty, as you know, dear, is my watchword. So I am here with you, as I will be always."

"You will be always where it suits you best," amended the girl coldly; "and you will resign Anne—when it suits you only."

"You are excited and not yourself," observed Mrs. Kienon, with a compassionate glance at the young face with this new haughtiness upon it. "I will leave you alone for a little. I often feel it wise and kind to leave the young to themselves, when other matrons, with every good intention too, poor things, but not with my experience, would worry and annoy them with questions and enforced companionship."

The fact was that Mrs. Kienon was so afraid of being ruffled by any possible rejoinder of her young cousin's that, as far as was compatible with the maintenance of her dignity, she hastened her retreat.

"Their pleasure always! Their own pleasure—always!" cried the girl, pacing the quiet room when Mrs. Kienon had left it. "There has never been a thought for me—in my own house—save from Anne. And they have taken Anne from me!"

Then came the memory of those bright rooms at the Knoll, where the Nelsons had loved to welcome her—all empty now; then of another absence bitterer still; and the shadow around the girl grew and deepened; yet no tears came to cool and rest the burning, passionate, sorrowful eyes.

She shook her head when Keats came, in great surprise, to tell her the luncheon-gong had sounded twice, and still paced to and fro, actually imprisoned, as it were, by thought, haunted in this new loneliness by the sound of Gervys Lester's voice and step and laugh, and even breath, seeing only his face wherever her sad eyes would turn.

At last a quiet and welcome interruption came to this unnatural feeling of isolation. Keats knew his mistress too well to have her refused to Miss Beton, or to take that lady to Mrs. Kienon, so he went himself into the library to inform his mistress that Miss Beton desired to see her.

"I will see her here," said Miss Glenorris eagerly; and the instant the door was closed upon her true—but nervous—friend the girl put her into the Squire's great chair, and, kneeling beside her, buried her face in her lap and cried like a tired grief-stricken child.

Miss Beton's wisdom was that of truest sympathy, and so the tears were not stopped until the fountain was exhausted and the sorrow spent.

Joy knew the tears had done her good, and thanked Miss Beton for it all. And presently, when Keats sent tea into the library with the lovely little Sevres duet china, and no allusion to Mrs. Kienon, who was to be served with hers alone, she found out unexpectedly that she was hungry, and quite enjoyed the dainty sandwiches Keats had provided with a vivid remembrance of his mistress's untasted luncheon.

"My dear," said Miss Beton, when at last she put on the quaint little fichu Joy had taken from her, "I have been so ceaselessly gossiping to you of that unprincipled man and our probable success in bringing him to justice that I never told you Mr. Lester came in to bid me good-bye this morning."

"He would," said Joy, her tone revealing her confidence in his doing all things very kind.

"You always were generous in speaking of him," observed the elder lady, with a pleasant smile, "even though you and he were what Mrs. Fears-Kienon called *antipatica*."

"Miss Beton," said Joy, with an earnestness which almost startled her listener, "I know now that I always deeply respected Mr. Lester—no man in the world more."

"Indeed!" said Miss Beton simply. "I am surprised; and yet I never could comprehend your dislike to him, for I often thought there was a—a kind of similarity in your characters. Of course he was not in a right position for you—though a perfect gentleman, and indeed with something more aristocratic about him even than Lord Clenrobert or Sir Hussay—but, if Oh, I beg your pardon, my dear, if I have offended you; but of course I felt sure he would ask you—like all other men!"

"He never will, Miss Beton," said the girl gently, for the expression which had arrested Miss Beton's words had not been one of annoyance as she fancied.

"No, no, not now, of course, my dear!" the elder lady hastened to assert. "But, if this most terrible tragedy had not cast such a wicked gloom and suspicion over him——"

"Oh, he would not have asked me even then!" said Joy, with a swift painful blush. "So please never think that again, will you?"

"Never, my dear," agreed Miss Beton amiably.

CHAPTER XXVI.

UNTIL dinner-time the girl sat alone in the old library, haunted in her solitude by the question Norman Pardy had asked, and which, as she knew now, had never for long remained absent from her thoughts—why had Gervys Lester disliked and distrusted Agatha Porch?

There was but one clue to this question, and that she could not follow—Agatha Porch had come into Devonshire to seek a will which she believed to be lying somewhere in Merlswood.

There had been—there could be—no such will. Yet had not Mr. Ozanne felt doubtful as to its having been destroyed?

"I fancy," the girl said to herself, her hands upon her temples, as she looked round the quiet old library, "if I had looked myself everywhere and failed, as Miss Porch failed, and as Mr. Pardy must have failed, I should lose this restlessness. Of course"—smiling at the thought—"I am not likely to discover what others have vainly sought; but it will surely settle some of my vague, uneasy, ungrateful thoughts; besides, it will be something to do while the house feels so desolate. I should never have thought"—wistfully misapprehending her lonely feeling—"that I should miss Anne so much. I will do it," she said suddenly, after a long silent thought; "I will begin this very evening!"

After dinner she did so, in the lamplight, continuing her search the next morning, going slowly and thoughtfully to work until she had emptied every drawer and cupboard and recess in the oak-panelled library, and—far from content with that—had the pictures down and the carpet up, and personally and minutely examined every article the room contained, as she well knew Agatha Porch could not have done.

This occupied her until the afternoon of the third day; and it was when the unsuccessful search in this room was completed, and she stood resting by the fire, which she had had for company, delighted to feel how thoroughly and conscientiously she had conducted her investigation, fruitless as it had been, that she recalled the day when Agatha Porch had hunted for the mythical will, and she had so wearily waited for her to give up her bootless task.

She began dreamily to wonder why she had felt so weary and depressed when none of this great unhappiness had touched her; and, in searching for a cause, there came back to her the old fancy she had had while she waited, that, if she looked round, she would see the twelve watchful apostles on the worn tapestry in Wilfred Glenorris's old play-room.

She raised her head with a sudden resolution. That should be the room she would search next—not the late Squire's bed-room and dressing-room, as she had intended, according to her plan of going slowly and methodically through the house in a certain order she had mapped out.

She went at once to that old chamber which had been the play-room of the one child of the house, and, as she opened the door and locked it behind her, she shivered a little with the recollection of why she had visited it last.

She stood first looking around her on the boy's trapeze and swing hanging from the ceiling, on the tapestried walls, then on the few articles of old oak furniture the room contained. There was no chance of anything being concealed there, she thought, with a feeling of deep relief; still she would seek as conscientiously as she had done below, and the employment would surely give her ease.

The old oak chest was empty, save for a few torn engravings, which she took out singly, finding no papers hidden between. The high old oak cupboard held nothing but the cushioned ropes which had been taken from the small gymnasium and put away upon its upper shelf.

There were no drawers in the square oak table in the centre of the room, no crevices in the projecting mantelpiece, and no opening lids to the deep narrow window-seats down on one side of the room. She went slowly along the other side, where hung the faded tapestry.

It should be taken down to-morrow, and every article of furniture moved as it had been in the library; but, first, she could do her especial part alone. What else was there to occupy her busy brain and willing fingers and sad heart?

The twelve dull pairs of eyes seemed fixed upon her, but she could to-day afford to smile at her own fancies, and—perhaps because the silence seemed unnatural while she was among those alert and upright figures—she unconsciously fell to singing softly to herself.

"The voice of the dead was a living——"

She broke off abruptly, with a rather pitiful little shake of the head, and, with a glance from the tapestry to the old toys above it, began work in earnest. She drew forward one of the chairs and stood upon it, then, laughing to find herself so far too low to reach them, wheeled the square table up to the wall and stood on that.

Still she was too short, so she sprang to the floor again, and, setting a chair upon the table, climbed upon that. Thus she could reach to take down the toys; so she began at the corner, intending to go up the room in the methodical way in which she had conducted this search.

There was a bare space over the curly head of St. Bartholomew, then above the long yellow ringlets of St. John hung the little rusty gun. Joy took it from its hooks with gentle reverential fingers, and stepped down to the table, laying it on the chair beside her, that she might examine it more at her ease.

The butt end was solid and heavy—there was no deception there—and the barrel was evidently empty; but, to make assurance doubly sure, she took out one of her little gold solitaires and dropped it in. It fell noisily down the barrel.

"No paper there!" she said, with a laugh and hung the toy back in its place.

Pushing the table a little farther on its easy castors, she climbed again, and reached the battledores that were fixed over the dark face of the Iscariot.

"If anywhere, it ought to be here," she said, with a smile, glancing from the sullen black eyes to the toys she laid on the chair, to examine at her leisure.

With her tiny penknife she cut the strained parchment, drawing the blade all round inside; but there was no paper there and, turning the damaged sides against the wall, she replaced the battledores, and, one by one, took down the shuttlecocks, examined and replaced them. Again she pushed on the table, passing four upright figures with the blank wall above them, and then she stopped before St. James, who stood blandly regarding her, indifferent to the book he held open on his facing hand. The two bats crossed above his head were scrutinised carefully; but no portion was hollow and neither of the handles unscrewed. Replacing them exactly as they had been, with a sigh of amusement at her own systematic and vain proceedings, she sprang once more to the ground to make her last trial.

There was but a little way to push the table now, against St. Peter, who dangled a huge key from his thumb and smiled benignly on a distant cock with open beak. With the same tender reverent touch, she took down the old kite, carefully unhooking the long tail wound round it and laying all upon the chair to inspect slowly. The papers forming the kite were transparent, and certainly no will lurked between them; so she propped the kite against the chair, and laid the long tail upon the seat, standing herself to take out and open every single paper fly that formed it.

Only when she saw how each slip of paper she loosened and untwisted was blank did she realise how a new fear had gripped her heart when she had taken down this toy.

"I suppose," she said, laughing, and the color coming back to her cheeks, "it was a fancied fear."

One after another, all were blank. It scarcely seemed worth while to continue such a useless task: yet she would miss no faint chance here, as elsewhere. But, oh, how good it was to find each strip of crumpled paper that she opened unsullied by a word of writing!

Her cheeks were growing flushed at this unwonted task, her fingers began to tremble in the strong restraint she put upon herself not to hurry over this, as she had not hurried over any set in her search. Though it seemed so needless to take such pains, yet she conscientiously untied each knot, and took out and opened each slip of paper.

Not once would she cut the string, for the single link was not difficult to slacken, and she would leave the toys just as they had been for so many years.

Only two left now! She heaved a long sigh of relief, and, daintily taking out the paper which was the last but one, opened it simply as a form, scarcely glancing at it. But in an instant her hand was arrested, her breath quickened, her fingers lost their gentle firmness, though in the next instant she saw it was but a little letter she held—no will.

Oh, that was beyond a doubt; it was no will! She straightened the paper, and read every word of the few lines it contained, to herself first, and then aloud, as if their meaning might be clearer so.

"To please my wife, and for my old friend's sake, I have made the will she desired, and I have promised not to destroy it. But I did it against my better judgment, and I have left its discovery to fate."

The girl's pale lips broke into an almost tender smile as that word recalled what Gervys Lester had said about a man's fate being the living spirit of his dead words and thoughts and acts.

Thinking only of that, she gently detached the last twist of paper, and opened it with steady busy fingers, while her eyes went readily to their share of the task. Suddenly she started back, drawing her hand across her eyes, her breath hurrying through her pale parted lips, her mind dazed and bewildered.

The strip of paper was closely covered with small handwriting, and it held three signatures. Joy tried to read those first, but the small dark lines all mingled, and ran up and down and across the paper, becoming a blurred mass to her.

She pressed her eyes for a minute with her fingers, then opened them and tried again—in vain. She held her hand upon her heart, and closed the beautiful feverish eyes, then opened them and fixed them on the paper, bravely resolved to read what was there, even though the room swam round with her and seemed growing dark. It was straightforward, and surely the very simplest will that ever rich man left.

"If I outlive my son"—so it began, and Joy knew the old Squire had, beyond all doubt, outlived his son—"I wish the following will carried out." Then, after a brief list of charities and annuities, it said—"All the rest of my property I leave to Norman Pardy for his father's sake, except the jewels, which are heirlooms."

The girl's head bent lower and lower as she read it once, twice, thrice. For his father's sake! A ray of gladness shone for a moment in her sore heart when she found this was not done for the young man's own sake. It gave her a sort of comfort to feel sure of that, as she remembered her last meeting with him.

Oh, what was it not to do in its great power?

Norman Pardy! What was Norman Pardy, that he should make all this impossible? Who was Norman Pardy, that he should usurp the place of one of the old race and name? He, a man whom now she knew that she had always despised—and feared—was he to wrest from her her own just inheritance? Was he to stop her labors, and kill her hope for Gervys Lester's freedom—he?

And only—only she had found it. No one else had been able to do so, though she had given them every chance. Surely that was enough for her to have done—to have given them every opportunity! Now who would know? And who would suffer if she burned——

She started back, her breast heaving, and a great horror on her face? And then she was motionless, almost as if paralysed as she stood.

It was long minutes before a wan little smile broke on her unsteady lips.

"But if I put it back," she said, as if the other thought had not broken off, "that is no harm. Any one may find it. I will give every opportunity, as I have given before. I will keep no one back."

She stood motionless upon the table against the tapestried wall, her lips still white and parted, her eyes vacant in their fixity, her hand gripping the back of the firm old oaken chair against which the kite leaned, while her heart seemed to beat in her throat as if it would suffocate her.

She heard the dinner-gong repeated and repeated, and at last even the door of the room was tried by Keats, in his anxiety for dinner not to be served without his mistress; but she made no sign or movement; even her very breathing seemed hushed while he was within hearing.

But for that grip, which hurt her, on the rail of the chair, she would hardly have been conscious where she was.

And thus she stood, and the slow time dragged on.

Mrs. Kiemon dined alone, with very much paraded regret at Miss Glenorris's unaccountable absence; and, but that hours after dinner-time, Keats once more came and tried the locked door, the girl might not have stirred all night. But that aroused and disturbed her.

She loosened her tight and painful grip, and covered her aching eyes again, acutely feeling now the slight sounds she herself made. Mechanically she refastened the last paper back into the tail of the kite, neatly as she had done the others, and mounted the chair and replaced the toy, twining the long tail around it, just as it had been before. Then she descended to the ground, put the chair against the wall, moved the table back into the centre of the room, gave one woeful stricken glance around her, then turned the key, and went away from the haunted room.

Rachel had tried in vain to feel at ease during her mistress's long and inexplicable absence. She could not settle to sew or read. She moved uneasily about Miss Glenorris's rooms, listening for her step; and, when she heard it at last she went towards the open door, with a look of intense and glad relief.

The next instant she started back appalled. A few hours ago her mistress had gone away, fresh and young and beautiful; she had returned with the look and step of one who had risen unwisely from a sick-bed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"NORMAN!"

The invalid mother's face brightened, as only one sight or sound in all the world could brighten it, as he knelt beside her couch, and kissed her first upon the lips and then on either cheek, as was his wont. But her deep joy was always very silent; so, without a word—though her eyes said so much—she laid one frail caressing hand upon his silky hair and drew it back from his pale calm face.

Presently, when he had seated himself beside her, and taken one thin white hand in his, smiling into her loving eyes, she spoke—

"You have been in town only two days, Norman; but they seem to me two weeks."

"That is capital!" he cried, to cheer her. "Why, I have known you say a two days' absence of mine has seemed two years!"

"Every year I think—I hope," said the mother, with a long gentle sigh, "I grow more patient, dear; and in each absence now I have more of your loving thought and care to re-live and to make me happy. That takes the time—not that I wish to hasten it. Ah, no! I would make every hour twice as long."

"My patient mother!" said Norman, tenderly stroking the delicate hand he held; and then he told her little incidents of his journeys, and of his day in town, while she feasted her eyes upon his face in deep content, silently and gratefully rejoicing in this son who was so much to her.

"And what," he asked at last, "has happened here? Have you seen any one? Or is there no one here to see just now?"

"Miss Glenorris came to see me this morning early."

"Then you are all right," declared Norman smiling. "You were cheered, as you always are, by a visit from her."

"Yes, dear, she did me good; and yet"—hesitatingly—"since she left I've felt anxious and even troubled about her, though I have called myself to account for any such nonsense. There was, I am sure, something different—inexplicably so."

"How?" asked the young man, in unfeigned surprise.

"I do not know; I wish I did. When she first came in, though she smiled and was sweet and prompt and thoughtful for me, I was—almost shocked. She looked ten years older than on the day I saw her last, though that is not quite two weeks ago."

"These worries around her—of other people's—must have made her feel ill and look so," complained Norman; and though his mother's loving ears could not translate the note of jealous fear lest it might be anxiety about Gervys Lester which had affected Joy Glenorris, they detected a strong restrained interest in her answer to his question.

"Yes—ill," she returned musingly, "and yet changed otherwise too—indescribably changed, dear, as I said. I have been thinking," she went on, as her son kept silence, covering her thin hand with his large cool palms, "that possibly the emptiness of the place depresses her. Both her cousins are in town, she tells me. We know the Nelsons are all away; and you said Mr. Lester had left. Now it seems that Lady Vickery and Sir Hussay have gone over to entertain a party on their Irish estate; so we can imagine that Merlswood must feel solitary to so young a girl. Still she had to confess to me that both the Vickerys and the Nelsons had entreated her to join them, and she had declined; and of course she could be in town with her own cousins if she chose."

"Of course," acquiesced Norman briefly. "Then you think, mother, that Miss Glenorris is fretting for her county neighbors."

"I can think of nothing else, dear. The only one who is always at home, you see," she added, smiling rather wistfully, "can be of no use or pleasure or benefit to any one."

"Not to me?" queried the young man, fondly stroking the poor hand he held. "And indeed, mother, I feel I have good cause to be jealous of you when—every one comes to see you!"

"My dear, it is for your sake only. Though I'm but a spiritless sick woman, I am your mother. If you do not remember that, others do."

"And you think"—with a forced laugh—"Miss Glenorris comes to see you because you are my mother?"

"I know it must be so."

"Did she not open your eyes to your mistake to-day? Did you not"—in a rather stiff tone—"recollect, after her departure, that she had not once alluded to me in even the most distant and casual manner?"

"My dear," cried his mother deprecatingly, "she was scarcely herself this morning, as I said before. She would talk only of me, and even that was not in her usual way, I think. She begged me to remember how glad she would be always to hear of any good or happiness or wealth that should fall to me."

"Even" interpolated the young man, laughing at such nonsense, "if I were obliged to profit by it too."

"Hush, dear! She said it in the deepest and truest earnestness; and, if she did not mention you, I know it was only because her thoughts were so intent on comforting or amusing me. Why, she would not," continued Mrs. Pardy, quite unaware that her hesitation had been obvious, "voluntarily speak a word of herself! I had the greatest difficulty in making her; but I could not resist it. It seemed the only way I could think of to repay her."

"Well done, my gentle mother! How did you manage?"

"I spoke to her of her hospital and her House of Rest, and—other things; of what she had done for so many; of how she had won the love and gratitude of hundreds; and what delight it must surely give her now to feel this; and what happiness it must shed on all her future life. I think I was moved to say this by the strangely sorrowful look in her eyes. What lovely eyes they are, Norman!"

"And did she think with you!"

"No. She only said rather wistfully that she had not had a very long happy time. Not yet, I acknowledged; and she turned the conversation then, but I went back to it. Beside the adoration and gratitude of the poor and the affection of her friends, I said, she had so many other things to bring her happiness; but, when I began to rehearse them, she acknowledged none, though what she said was all quite gentle. When I said she had beauty, she shook her head and gave me her version of that old falsehood that beauty lives only in the eye of the beholder. She smiled when I bade her leave out the 'only,' and then she said, even if she had, what could beauty do? What could it not do? would be an easier question to answer, I said. Then I reminded her she had talents too—for I thought to put everything before wealth—but she said, No, she excelled in no one single thing, and that not a talent she possessed could serve her in a time of need. And, when at last I mentioned her wealth, she gave a laugh as sad as a cry—you smile, as if I were romantic, dear—and did not speak for some minutes. Then she said quite seriously, 'Mrs. Pardy, whoever owns Merlswood will be as welcome there as I, and will win the love you have kindly spoken of. And,' she went on as if for a moment she had forgotten me, 'how many—how very many—live without what I have had!' Naturally I asked her what she meant. 'Some one must follow me, you know, Mrs. Pardy,' she said; and after that we were silent—I was put out a little, not understanding her as I generally do so readily; she was deep in thought, it seemed to me—until she irrelevantly made some remark upon my new peacock frieze, and admired the quieter tone below. Of course I told her that was your taste; and then she kissed me and went."

"Kissed you!" Norman bent his lips to his mother's holding them there for a few moments, while she as little comprehended the relief it was to him to be able to decide that Joy Glenorris had given proof of harboring no resentment against him as she did the strength and ruthlessness of his passion for this girl.

"And can you possibly be anxious about her after that kiss, mother?" he asked airily. "If so, I will ride over to-morrow—in the morning, if I can invent an errand to excuse unconventionality, in the afternoon if I cannot. What a pity it is too late to go to-day! Now are you not wishing to rest?"

"My dear, my truest wish is to have you beside me; but it is nearly your dinner-time."

"Oh, I am not thinking of my dinner! the young man responded, quite as readily as if he were not desirous of a little solitude just now. "But I dare say you are sleepy, mother. Ah, yes, I'm sure of it, now I come to look at you, though"—with a not quite easy smile—"you try to defy it! What slaves we are, after all, conquered in spite of ourselves!"

"Cared for in spite of ourselves," corrected Mrs. Pardy quietly, while she wondered whether she could possibly, even to her son's loving gaze, have betrayed a sleepiness she was so far from feeling. "No, dear; I do not yet hear the footsteps of my night-nurse. Such a tender night-nurse sleep is," she added dreamily—"and yet I often think how we nightly die."

"Why is it you so often speak of death?" asked the young man, rising to shake off an uncomfortable foreboding which was not new to him.

"Why indeed, my dear," she questioned softly, with a smile to reassure him, "when I know so well there is no death but sin? You know that, Norman, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, dear, why should we, who do not hesitate to speak to each other on all topics, hesitate to speak of this, which should be always in our thoughts? You know that He who gave us to each other, and will take us from each other, does always what is right and best. That is enough to know, dear; is it not."

"If it were not," said Norman, smiling quite pleasantly, "we can know no more."

"Hush, my dear!" she whispered very earnestly; and he nodded and went, leaving a strange vague sense of sadness in his mother's heart.

But, before he had reached the foot of the staircase, he turned and retraced his steps slowly and noiselessly to his mother's door, where he stood listening. The utter silence within struck him sadly; and without making a sound, he opened the door and looked in. His mother lay exactly as he had left her, her eyes closed, her white face very still, and for a moment his heart beat nervously. Then she opened her eyes, as if feeling his gaze, and smiled happily to meet it.

"I only came to say I'll run up as soon as I have dined," he said, hitting on the first speech which occured to him to cover that ridiculous anxiety of which he was now ashamed; and then he went away again, with a swifter step and easier mind.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

NO LACK OF SPECTACLES.—A gentleman of considerable talent as an orator became a member of a legislative body in one of the States.

In speaking, he was addicted to an old habit of handling his spectacles, first placing them upon his nose, suffering them to remain a minute or two, throwing them upon his forehead, and finally folding them up and laying them before him upon the desk.

One day a very important question came up for consideration, and he commenced a speech in opposition. A friend to the proposed measure, who was a most incorrigible wag withal, determined to spoil the effect of the honorable member's remarks, and accordingly, before he entered the House, provided himself with a dozen pairs of spectacles.

The member commenced his speech with his usual ability. But a few minutes only had elapsed before he was at work with his spectacles, and finally got them upon his forehead.

At this juncture our wag, who stood ready, laid another pair upon the desk before the speaker. These were taken up and by regular gradations gained a place on his forehead by the side of the others. A third, fourth, and fifth pair were disposed of in the same manner, and at last, when the speaker had warmed into one of his most eloquent sentences, he deposited a sixth pair, and there was one long and loud peal of laughter. The speaker, raising his head, grasped the spectacles. He saw the joke, and dashing the glasses upon the floor, left the hall.

CHARITY.

BY RITA.

The rich man gave his dole, but ill content
To find his heart still moved by human woe;
The poor man to his neighbor simply lent
The scanty savings he could scarce forego.

The one passed on, and asked to know no more;
The other's wife all night, with pity brave,
That neighbor's dying child was bending o'er,
And never deeming it was much she gave.

Oh! God forgive us that we dare to ask
Solace of costly gifts and fruitless sighs!
Scorn on the sigh that shuns the unwelcome task,
The dole that lacks the salt of sacrifice!

No gilded palm the crushing weight can lift;
No soothing sigh the maddening woe can cure;
'Tis love that gives its wealth to every gift;
Ill would the poor man fare without the poor!

DOUBLE CUNNING.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

CHAPTER XLIX.

MEDICINE FOR A MIND DISEASED.

THE days seemed of interminable length but they glided slowly by.

Range had no tobacco, and his longing for it was intense as he sat at his window and smelt the fumes from Jack Pannell's pipe, when he hung about the garden with the bull-dogs, now digging, now cutting the grass, whose scent was pleasant in the mellow autumn air.

He always had some tool or other in his hand, mostly a knife, and he would dawdle about for hours with this and a bit or two of matting through the button-hole of his jacket, ready for tying up loose strands, or to cut away redundant growth.

These days were wonderfully similar, Range's gaolers coming and going; and at last the eve of the seventh day had arrived, and the next he, as he understood it, was to give way or be submitted to what Mewburn called heroic treatment.

"Let them treat," he had said many times over; "I'm not beaten yet!"

He had had a chat or two with Jane, but very short ones, through the wall, for they had been interrupted.

The pin was hidden in a corner, ready for use when he had a chance; but no chance came, and he walked up and down the room thinking, and ending by going to the window to watch the brickmaking, forcing himself to take great interest in the progress of the kilns, some of which were still burning while others, finished and cooled down, were carted off to the barges in the canal, their destination the walls of houses in the big city.

The brickmaking seemed to be over for the season, and the busy toil no longer went on as when first he watched it; barrows were not run here and there, and the children had departed.

"When the winter comes," he said to himself, "that will be a dismal waste, and I shall have some fresh interest to seek unless I am free."

He was sitting by the open window chirping in imitation of the sparrows' cry, and so like that the little things hopped about in the ivy-covered gutter over his head, answering him, and ready to come down to the sill as soon as he drew back.

All at once he saw Pannell cross the garden with a good-sized ladder on his shoulder.

"Where's that kept?" thought Range, as his heart gave a throb.

For there was the means of surmounting the high wall, raising the ladder up, passing it over, and descending the other side, with no fear of a sprained ankle or jar to hinder flight when once outside.

Pannell disappeared by coming nearer to the house, and soon after there was a rustling noise, and directly came a loud tapping and the scent of tobacco.

"I'll ask him for some and a book to read said Range to himself; "that will give me paper for my messages."

He was about to speak when the dull sound of footsteps could be heard in the next room, and then faintly came the peculiar cough that Sheldrake uttered from time to time.

This stopped him, and he listened to the tapping beneath his window.

"How are you getting on, old man?" came from below.

Range did not reply. He did not know that the question was really intended for him.

"I say, how are you getting on, old man?" came again.

"Are you speaking to me, sir?" said Range, with his face pressed between the bars.

"Of course I am! How goes it?"

"Oh! I'm happy as the day's long," replied Range. "Plenty of books to read and cigars to smoke. Every enjoyment I could wish for, except a billiard-table. Can you have one set up for me?"

"Don't chaff!" growled Pannell.

"What are you doing?"

"Nailing up the ivy. Blown loose. I say, I'm sorry for you, old man!" came in a good-humored growl.

"You're a——well, one who tells untruths!" retorted Range. "If you were sorry, you'd set me free."

"What! and pitch over my friends, eh? No, that wouldn't do! I say, you had better give in, old man. Pay up and go way."

"Ask me in ten years' time."

"Ah, well! just as you like; but you'll have to," said Pannell. "Hang the ladder! I was nearly over."

Range heard a hasty descent and what sounded like a rearrangement of the ladder. Then Pannell seemed to mount again and to tap in nail after nail.

"I say, Range, old man," came up.

"Well?"

"Look here, I like you, old fellow—I do, really."

"You are showing it!"

"Can't help it. I'm bound. But, look here, can I do anything for you?"

"Yes; write to Sir Harry Fanshaw about how I'm fixed, and then make yourself safe; and as soon as I'm clear of this cursed gang I'll write you a cheque for a thousand pounds, and I swear, as man to man, I will never prosecute you—mind, you!"

"Will you make it five?"

"No," said Range; "and I won't give a dollar to either of your friends."

"Well, I wouldn't if you'd make it five, old man," said Pannell, tapping in another nail. "And just look here, I suppose I'm a blackguard, but no one ever found me go against my friends, so don't you get trying that on again."

"Why did you ask me if you could help me, then, you great scoundrelly bully?"

"Go it," said Pannell, chuckling. "Look here, I only wanted to do you a good turn if I could. Like a book or two?"

"No."

"A few cigars?"

"No."

"Yes, you would. You didn't say that as if you wouldn't. I'll give you some first chance. Eh?"

"What are you talking to yourself about?" came up now in Mewburn's voice.

"Because I like to converse with a respectable man," replied Pannell.

"Here, come down, and don't get fooling there! We shall be too late for the train."

"Shell ready?"

"Yes. He was coming down when I did. You're always nailing up something."

"Shouldn't mind nailing you up, Nathan, like a hawk on a barn door; or in your coffin, if you like," growled Pannell. "There, I'm coming."

"Don't leave that ladder there."

"Who's going to?" was the reply. "Wouldn't matter if I did. Don't reach high enough."

"Here, come along—there's no time to lose."

Range heard Pannell's voice in a muttering growl, the rustle of the ladder amongst the ivy, then steps on the gravel, and after that all was still.

"They are going out," he thought—"perhaps gone. Oh! if I could get out that bar!"

He seized it and tugged and strained with all his might, but in vain. The bar was quite fast, and he gave up in despair, and went and examined the locks of the door; but he could do nothing without tools, and he had only a pin.

He walked to the window and looked out to see that the bull-dogs were on the lawn, ready to start up and growl, but subside as he drew back; and he was wondering whether he could do anything when there was a cough in the next room, and he flew to the wall and tapped, to have it answered.

"You there, Jane?" he said.

"Yes. They've all gone out but Mrs. John, and won't be back until to-morrow."

"Where have they gone?" he said, excitedly.

"I don't know, Mr. Arthur; but I heard Doctor Parkins say something about 'Pothecaries Hall."

"Apothecaries Hall!" said Range to himself. "That's in London. What an opportunity! Jane!" he cried aloud.

"Yes, Mr. Arthur."

"Listen to me!"

"Yes, Mr. Arthur, I am a-listening to you."

"Get me the keys of these doors and let me out."

"Oh! Mr. Arthur; I shouldn't dare if I could, and——"

The girl coughed loudly—a signal they had agreed upon; and Range stood with his ear to the wall, listening, and not in vain, for directly after he heard the murmur of another voice, in low deep accents, that he knew only too well, and then they died away and a door closed.

"I must help myself," he said, with his breath hissing between his teeth. "No help will come from outside."

He stood thinking a moment or two, and then ran to the door and tried and shook it, placing his shoulder to the portion by the lock; but after a few minutes he gave up in despair.

"Like a rock!" he muttered.

Then he ran to the window, and, placing his feet upon the sill, drew himself up, and, seizing one of the middle bars with both hands, drew and strained with all his force; but the bar did not budge. The frame was too strong, and the iron let in too far.

"It is maddening," he panted; "no tools no means of escape. If I had but a file or a steel saw!"

He stopped and listened, with hope rising in his breast, for there was the sound of a lock shooting back, and then of a bolt drawn.

It was only a faint sound, for it was beyond the double doors of his room, one of which he felt sure was of baize.

"Jane has the keys!" he panted, and he advanced to the door; but only to stop short as he heard the rustle of silk, and then a pause; a jarring noise as of a small bar being swung round, and then, to his surprise, one of the little panels at the top of the door opened away from him, and he saw the handsome, mocking face of Sarah Pannell gazing in, framed like a picture in the solid wood.

CHAPTER L.

AT THE WICKET.

THEY stood gazing at each other for quite a minute—she with her irritating, contemptuous smile; he with a frown deepening on his face as he noted the size of the little panel, of whose existence he had been ignorant, and wondered whether he could get it open when she was gone and force his way through, till he recalled the real fact that there were two doors beyond.

"Well," she said, "why don't you speak? Are you not glad to see a visitor once in a while?"

He did not answer, only looked at her coldly, and thought what a handsome, cruel face it was.

"Why don't you speak?" she said; "are you afraid of me?"

The disposition in his mind was to fiercely revile her and bid her go; but he was a prisoner, and this woman doubtless had the keys that would set him free. He felt that he must temporise, and he replied—

"Afraid? No. Are you, that you look at me as if I were a wild beast in a cage?"

"Well, you are so fierce and mad," she said, laughing in a forced way, "I dare not open the door and come in. How ridiculous you look like that!"

She laughed at him mockingly, and, in spite of his self-command, Range felt the warm color spread over his smooth face and bare head.

"Well," she said, "what are you going to do?"

"Treat you with the contempt you deserve," he said, coolly.

It was the woman's turn to flush now, and an angry glare seemed to burn in her dark eyes; but she mastered her annoyance and changed her tactics at once.

"No, you are not," she said, in her low, soft voice. "I do not deserve it. Listen to me, Arthur. I began by mocking and laughing at you, but it was only to hide the real feelings in my breast. I cannot bear it longer, and I am come to tell you how it pains me too see you like this. I have come to help you."

"Is this some new form of banter?" he said, very bitterly. "A fresh way of bringing me to your knees, as you have called it?"

"No, no! No, no! you do not understand me. A woman is so weak that she has to fly to her anger for weapons against you strong men. I was angry and bitter when I said all that, Arthur. I did not mean it, and I cannot bear to see you like this."

"Do you mean it?" he said.

"Mean it? You know I do."

"Show it, then, by opening that door and telling me where to find clothes that I can wear without exciting notice."

"Yes, I will," she said, eagerly. "They have all gone to town, and the course is open. I will do all you wish."

"Then I am ready with any apologies you ask," said Range, warmly. "I retract everything, and you shall find me the most grateful of friends."

"Apology?" she said, softly—"grateful—friends. Is this all you can bestow on the woman who is ready to give up everything for your sake?"

"I really do not understand you," he said.

"You do understand me," she whispered: and she passed her hand through the aperture, with its palm extended, the long taper fingers seeming to ask that they might be taken and nestle warmly in his.

He hesitated for a moment, and then took the hand and held it.

"Well, yes," he said; "I am ready to forgive and forget always. I will shake hands."

"Forgive, but not forget," she said, softly. "How could they behave so cruelly towards you!"

Range flushed again as he saw her deep dark eyes gazing pityingly, it seemed, in his face.

"Oh! it don't matter. It will grow again," he said, laughingly. "They did not dig it up by the roots. So you will let me out?"

"Have I not told you I would do anything for your sake?" she whispered. "I have tried so hard to be angry and hate you, but I could not keep it. The thought that you were in pain and suffering was ever present, and you see I have come humbly to ask forgiveness and do penance for the past."

"Then the past is dead," he said. "Open the door and set me free."

"And those men?"

"What, Sheldrake and your husband?"

"Hush! Don't name him!" she exclaimed, with her brow growing puckered. "Tell me what you mean to do."

"To do? Well," he said, laughing, "I think the very first thing I should do would be to get myself a wig."

"You are trifling with me," she said, excitedly. "Tell me what you really propose to do. We should not dare to stay in London—you would take me on the Continent at once."

"Take—you?"

"Yes. This is no time for scruples. Have I not told you that I would give up all for your sake? This life is loathsome to me; that man disgusts me. The society of his companions is odious. I want to be free of this wretched life of deceit and treachery. Take me away to some land where we can forget all the pangs and sufferings of the past. Now, at once, only tell me that you love me, and we will go."

Arthur Range colored like a girl, turned white, and then his countenance assumed the aspect known as black.

"Take you—away with me?" he said.

"Yes, yes! Don't hesitate. Every minute is of value when we have to deal with such a man as Sheldrake."

"And John Pannell?"

She snatched her hand away and looked at him fiercely.

"Why do you mention him now?" she cried. "I tell you I hate him."

"But I don't. He seems to me a very decent kind of scoundrel, with a good deal of honor in his disposition; and he is your husband."

"Yes, to my sorrow," she cried out bitterly.

Then, changing her tone—

"Why do you talk like this, Arthur? Abroad there you made me love you. What is the world to us? Let me free you, and far away from here let all this terrible time be like a dream."

"I mean to make it so when I have escaped," he said, coldly.

"Then you will come?"

"What, out of here? Only give me the chance."

"And we shall——"

"I won't say anything about myself," he replied, coldly. "There, let us understand one another at once. It is as well to speak plainly."

"Yes, yes, pray speak!" she cried.

"The fact is, then, that your friends——"

"Don't call them my friends, Arthur," she said. "I hate and despise them, and the life they have forced me to lead."

"Well, then, these confederates have made a mistake."

"Mistake—what in you—in your firmness. Yes; I have admired it ever since you came."

"I don't mean that," he said, coldly. "They have shut me up here with the character of being mad. I am sane enough; the madness lies with you, and places should be changed."

She stood, trembling with rage and disappointment, biting her lip with her white teeth, and her eyes flashed as she read his firmness, and how vainly she had degraded herself, to stand lower than ever in his eyes.

"I am much obliged to you," he continued, "and if you like to set me free I shall thank you after my own way, not after yours. If you do not, I am satisfied to wait my time."

"Do you not know that they will nearly kill you to have their way?"

"I expect they will stop at nothing, but they have not yet won their game."

"Oh, you do not mean this!" she cried, mastering her rage once more to make a last effort. "I offer you freedom, love, and happiness. Come, I can trust your word. Tell me I shall be the companion of your flight, and you are free to go. I tell you I will dare everything, even their rage, for your sake."

He looked at her half pityingly, half in disgust, that a woman should so degrade herself in his sight.

"No," he said, turning away to walk to the window and back. "They say, fight a certain person with his own weapon, madam, and I suppose I am at liberty to stand at nothing when dealing with such men as Sheldrake's gang; but your terms are such as I could not agree to, and——why, the woman's gone!"

In effect, the little wicket-like panel was closed, and without a sound, and the doors were shut so silently that it was only by listening intently that he could detect the shooting bolts.

CHAPTER LI.

A LOCK OF A LADY'S HAIR.

"JUDITH didn't care for me a pin," said Range, as he sat at his window staring down at the thick-headed bull-dogs, while, resting their heavy jowls upon their paws, they stared up at him; "somehow I loved her very dearly.—I suppose it was love," he mused.

"Seems very unfortunate for me; but I don't know: it was all right. A feeling like that for a sweet, refined woman who seems pure and holy to a man makes him different. The whole time that handsome she-fiend was proposing to me escape and freedom, and what she called love in a foreign land, I seemed to see Judith's pretty little soft, fair-haired head looking on and watching me to see what I was going to do.

"Yes, I suppose it is love I felt—feel for her; and, unless I alter very much, it seems to me that my feeling for that sweet, refined English lady is going to influence my life.

"I don't hold any grudge against her. It was not natural. She was engaged to that captain, poor girl, and it was what she looked forward to as her duty; she was never anything but kind to me. I had no business to be so fiery, and to go spoiling a sweet kind of friendship by making love.

"Friendship? Yes, I suppose that's what she thought it, and I'm going to think it so, and keep her sweet memory locked up here tight as long as I live; and I think it will make me a better man.

"Why? Because, God bless her! I shall always feel that I may meet her again some day; and then I should like to be able to meet her sweet, innocent eyes, and let her look me through and through.

"Wonder whether she'll have any children when she's the captain's wife. Seems to me that I should like to know those little ones. Perhaps I shall, who knows? Perhaps not. Carleigh didn't like me, and he is one of the sort who couldn't believe in a man feeling a sort of reverence like—a something approaching holiness—for a woman.

"God bless her!" he said, softly; "if she

loved me, I'd give all I have to get free," and his eyes grew dim in the evening light, for he had been sitting thoughtfully there, pondering on Sarah Pannell's visit and his position.

"Yes, a feeling like that keeps a fellow straight," he went on, with more energy in his tones. "Let her—let all of them do their worst. I'm a weak sort of fellow, I suppose; but there's a deal to be done by holding on tight and letting people try to drag you away till they're tired."

His musings were cut short by the sound of the doors opening, and he found that his gaolers had returned, and his dinner was brought up.

* * * * *

The next was cleaning day, and Jane arrived as usual, looking daggers at him for something; but upon this occasion, for a long time, she was not left alone with the prisoner, who found that Mewburn and Pannell were disposed to hang about all the time, Sheldrake coming in at intervals.

He had again been strapped down without offering resistance for it was so much waste of energy, with no gain or recompense; so he suffered the indignity, and lay watching Jane, and sometimes answering a remark made by Jack Pannell.

The latter had stopped back, and this unusual action had had the effect of raising Mewburn's suspicions, and, as above said, he too hung about the room.

At last, as Mewburn was standing by the window, and Jane was busy with her duster, Pannell, who was seated upon the edge of the bed, said aloud—

"Well, it's your business; but if I were you, Arthur Range, I should strike my colors now. There's good advice; take it or leave it."

As he spoke, he quietly raised the quilt, and placed upon the bed a cigar-case and a couple of books, carefully drawing back the coverlid before rising and going slowly to the door.

Range darted a look at him full of gratitude, and then dropped the lids over his eyes as Mewburn followed him out and the door closed.

"I just thought as them two never meant to go," said the girl, in a hasty whisper, as she began fumbling with one hand in the bosom of her dress, and hitching herself about to get something within reach.

"It is unusual," said Range, smiling up at the girl.

"Oh, yes! you may laugh!" she cried. "Nice and innocent you pretend to look. I don't like it: so I tell you. Just you tell me, now, what did that Mrs. John want here yes'day?"

"Want here?"

"Yes: she come in, didn't she?"

"No, Jane. She talked to me from outside the door."

"Did you want her to come?"

"No, and I hope she'll never come again."

"You do?"

"Yes, of course."

"I've a good mind not to give it to you. I said I wouldn't when I come up to clean, but there it is, and——lish! here they are!"

She hastily thrust something beneath his pillow and scuffled to the windows, to one of which she gave a rub as the three companions entered the room.

"That will do, Jane," said Sheldrake, blandly. "The place will do very nicely, my good girl. You may go now."

Jane caught up her apparatus and departed; bands and straps were set free, and Sheldrake said, in his bland manner—

"Well, my dear Arthur, your time is up. How do you feel after a week's consideration?"

Range turned from him, rose from the bed, and walked to the window.

"A fresh phase of his complaint, doctor," said Sheldrake, blandly. "I'm afraid you will have to try your course."

Range listened, but he did not turn his head, but stood listening in dread, lest his tormentors should examine the bed and find his presents.

He was relieved, though, for after saying, with a harsh chuckle, "Have no fear for the result, my dear sir—I shall bring him to his senses," Mewburn moved to the door, the others followed, and Range was left all alone.

He listened eagerly till the last door was closed, and then threw back the quilt, to find a couple of novels and the case full of cigars, the donor's forethought having included a box of wax matches.

"Something to kill time and thought," Range said to himself; "and—yes, fly-leaves for messages. Now for the line."

He turned back the pillow to find clumsily doubled up in an old envelope, a long strand of hair twisted up into a ring, one which, when shaken out, was nearly four feet long.

"Why, there's enough, carefully joined," cried Range, "to fly a kite! I shall beat them yet!" and in his excitement he began at once carefully knotting the delicate threads of long hair together, as if he were making a fishing-line; and as he went on he wound the hair thread upon a little bit of stick, taken from the ready-laid fire.

He stopped in the midst of his work to think, perhaps wearied a little, for it was a tiresome task that tying together of the delicate threads.

"A fellow in my position snatches at very slight threads—even at hairs," he said, bitterly. "Isn't this all folly? I've got to tie a scrap of paper, with an appeal upon it, to the end of this thread, and get the wind to blow it over the wall, pulling it back till the right pull comes; so I shall want the wind in the right direction and a man out there beyond the wall at the same time, and the chances are a thousand to one that I shall not get them."

Just then he raised his eyes and started. He was seated close to the window so as to get the full light on his fine threads, and there, on the other side of the wall, was a big, rough-looking man, clay-daubed, unkempt, and ragged. His bare arms were folded across his half-bare chest, a short black pipe was in his mouth, and he was staring up curiously at the window.

"If my thread and letter were only ready!" exclaimed Range, starting up and placing his face close to the bars, giving the man a friendly nod, and waving his hand to him.

The man was about twenty yards away, and near enough for Range to see the changes in his countenance, which were at first a dull, stolid expression as he stared heavily. Then a smile began at the corners of his eyes, and spread till his mouth expanded in a broad grin; and taking his pipe from his lips with one hand, he bent himself and slapped his knee with the other, laughing hoarsely.

Range shrank back as if he had received a blow, and sank into his chair, red with anger, stung to the heart, and with a miserable feeling of despair coming over him as he realized again how tightly he was secured by the confederates' plans.

The glass had been left upon the nail, and, avoiding the window, he crept to it, took it down, gazed at the white head and smooth countenance within, and then threw himself upon the bed, with his face buried in his hands.

He could not stay there long, for the knowledge that he had been within speaking distance of a man who might help him made him creep once more to the window.

"I'll speak and tell him I'm not mad," he said to himself; and then, bitterly, "he will not believe me."

But there was no chance to try, for the man's back was towards him now, and he was a couple of hundred yards away, heavily plodding over the rough brickfield.

Range watched him until he disappeared in a hut nearly a quarter of a mile away, and then, in a disconsolate manner, he rolled up the long tress of hair and hid it, along with that he had tied together, beneath the mattress, and sat down to think in a more despairing mood than he had been in for days.

"They've got me fast," he thought—"faster than I could have believed. Shall I have to give up at last?"

He rose and began pacing the room, when suddenly he recollected Pannell's present, and taking out the case he lit a cigar and began to smoke, for he was hungry and faint.

"No!" he exclaimed, as he sent a thoroughly enjoyed puff of smoke into the air, "I will never be beaten like that!"

Then he stopped, turning the cigar over and over in his hand, thinking, for, though dulled, the sensation of hunger was on the increase.

It was very strange their keeping him so long without a meal.

Suddenly a thought flashed through his brain of certain words and allusions he had heard.

"The scoundrels!" he exclaimed. "They are surely not going to starve me into submission!"

CHAPTER LII.

"THEY'LL DRIVE ME MAD!"

NOT exactly starve, but bring him down to a point that should force him to submit.

That night Range went dinnerless to bed, and the next morning the tray was brought in by Mewburn, who sullingly placed it on the table, and Range saw that it bore nothing but a cup of tea and a slice of bread.

"Keep down the feverish symptoms," Mewburn said, with an ugly smile. "We have been following the wrong regimen, and the stomach has grown proud."

Determined upon a course of masterly inaction, as he called it, Range partook of his meal in silence—a very poor and unsatisfying repast, and was left alone to consider his plan about floating a message pricked on a slip of paper over the wall.

The plan had this advantage, that should he lose the scrap it would not, if it fell inside, attract the attention of anyone, as it bore no writing. If it were of any avail it must be from some one seeing it flying in the air—some one outside.

So he prepared a scrap, carefully pricking upon it the words:—

"A gentleman is kept prisoner here. Take this to the police."

All being ready, Range waited for a fortnight before there was a breeze that would waft his message over the wall.

When it did come one afternoon, he unwound his silky thread, and with throbbing breast tied the scrap of paper to it securely and sent it flying before an audience of bull-dogs, who looked on attentively.

It was a curious kind of fishing—fishing for liberty, Range called it. The paper fluttered off at once, made a dart towards the wall, and was well on its way when it was caught by a lurking wind that might have been in Sheldrake's pay, for it pounced round the end of the house and dashed the scrap of paper into a tree, from which it refused to be parted, spinning round and round a twig till some inches of the hair-line were wound up, and there it stayed like an awkwardly shaped blossom with only one petal. Then the hair-line parted on being pulled, and Range had to begin again.

He tried some half a dozen times during the next two or three weeks before he told himself that it was madness, for if he succeeded in getting one message well over the wall there was no one to see it.

"I might have known," he said, sadly; "but I was glad to cling even to a hair."

During these weary days and weeks his captors turned their seige into a blockade.

"That's what we must call it," said Sheldrake, smiling—"a blockade of the disease, eh, doctor?"

Mewburn smiled and nodded, and a slow process of starvation was carried on—not literal starvation, but just sufficient was given at every meal, and of the simplest kind, to keep the prisoner alive.

"I think this will prove effectual," said Mewburn, one morning, handing the prisoner the glass. "You look so much better, my dear Mr. Range."

Range made no reply.

"We are always ready to try a new departure, my dear Arthur—yours," said Sheldrake, nodding pleasantly. "When you think change of air would do you good and you are ready to pay the expenses, pray speak, and steps shall be taken at once. Five minutes would transact our business—a few days settle it."

Pannell said nothing, but contrived to come out last, throwing two or three cigars behind him as he closed the door; and he was left again to himself and the despair he would not show.

Days, weeks, months had passed, the weather had become cold, wet, and winterly, and the laid fire in the grate was a mockery, for at times the prisoner suffered from cold as well as hunger.

He knew his room by heart, every crack in the ceiling, every pattern upon the paper, which he had tortured into endless figures as he sat or lay, and thought how long was this to go on.

Sometimes he buoyed himself up with the hope that inquiry would be made after him; but always face to face came the knowledge that he had shut himself out from that help. He had told the Fanshaws that he was going, and his portmanteau lay ready packed and directed, so that the servants would send it to the hotel, where it would be forgotten. There was no one to ask for him, stranger as he was. Judith Nesbitt would expect no letter, and, till he had been absent from home a year, there was not the slightest chance of inquiry being made.

There was only one spark of hope: Uncle Wash had said that if he did not return within a year, he would come in search of him—a year, and he had lost count of time since he had been a prisoner. All he knew was that many months must have elapsed.

It was a hard fight to keep on this obstinate defence, when a few strokes of the pen would have set him free; but strangely enough, the thought of Judith Nesbitt helped his resistance.

"If I were at liberty," he said in a despondent tone, "I should be hanging about after her—I know I should—and only be insulted by that Carleigh and repulsed by her. Perhaps it's as well that I'm shut up out of mischief."

Not one chance of any kind, eagerly as he watched for it, did he find of escape, and there it went on—see-saw—a fortnight's starvation, then a relaxation, as if his gaolers were afraid of going too far, when he had more nutritious food, but always of the coarsest kind. And on all those weary days—save on that one occasion—not a soul approached the back of the premises but that brickmaker; while now the brickfield was a deserted slough, except when in the distance some brick carting and barge-loading went on.

Hundreds of plans did Range make to escape; violence seemed at last the only course left; and he went on waiting his time, while no opportunity came.

One day the idea came to him to arm himself with a good stout staff, and to do this he worked laboriously and carefully to take one of the chairs to pieces, and fitted it together again ready to seize upon a leg when he should want it—keeping the loose chair in the corner, where it was not likely to be touched.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

WHAT WAS OBJECTIONABLE.—When the censorship of the press was at its height in Austria, many laughable but nevertheless harassing alterations were considered necessary by the cautious officials who had to protect ordinary mortals from the insidious venom of liberty. In a comedy of Mosenthal's, Old Nick had to perform a part dressed in red inexpressibles; but the censor changed them to green ones; and, on the angry poet wanting to know why, he was answered, "Don't you know that Austrian generals wear red trousers?" In an historical work on the Austro-French war the Austrians were said to have retired; but the patriotic mind of the public watchman could not brook this, and he altered it into "The French then advanced." In a school-book, the sentence "The Cossacks ride on small horses" was considered an indirect insult to Russian greatness, and therefore the word "small" was struck out, the children being left to learn the remarkable fact that the Cossacks ride on horses! For many years the picture of Napoleon I. was prohibited in Austria, and once, when a copperplate engraver submitted a large plate of art industrial drawings, it was not allowed to pass because there was on the top of a lady's watch-case a statuette of the great Corsican. What was to be done so as not to lose the work of the whole plate? The ingenious engraver added a large moustache to the Napoleonic face, and now it was no longer considered to be offensive.

A MAN coming from the top of the Alleghanies to New York in winter was asked whether it was as cold there as in the city. "Horribly cold," said he, "for they've no thermometers there, and of course it gets just as cold as it pleases!"

Scientific and Useful.

TO KEEP LEMONS.—Lemons will keep good for months by simply putting them into a jug of butter-milk, changing the butter-milk about every three weeks. When the lemons are required for use, they should be well dried with a cloth.

TO DETECT SEWER-GAS.—Dissolve one ounce of pure acetate of lead in half a pint of pure rain-water. Dip a piece of blotting-paper in the solution, let it half dry, and then expose it where the presence of sewer-gas is suspected. Should the paper turn black, then the gas is there in considerable quantity.

CARPETS AND FLOORS.—When you have the wood-work in a room painted, it is a good plan to have about two inches of the floor painted also; have the paint the same color of the dashboard; then if, when changing carpets, the carpet will not come close to the wall, the little space left will not be so unsightly.

SAW-MILL WASTE.—Saw-mill waste is carbonized in kilns, and not in heaps in Sweden. The charcoal thus produced does well, when mixed with some charcoal made from natural wood, for forge fires, but is not so well adapted for blast furnaces. As compared with open heaps, kilns have the advantages of lower working cost, of better yield, the charcoal being cleaner and freer from dust, and of more easily conducted carbonization, the weather not affecting it.

SUBSTITUTE FOR LEATHER.—A substitute for leather is prepared as follows: The white of an egg, to which dextrine, gum, etc., may be added, is mixed with glycerine, fatty vegetable oil and a concentrated solution of caoutchouc into a mass; and this mass, which may be colored by the addition of a suitable coloring matter, is spread over plates and left until it solidifies. It is then left to dry at a low temperature, and tanned like leather by being taken through tannine solutions.

HOUSEHOLD PESTS.—Rats are said to have such a dislike to potash, that if it is powdered and scattered round their haunts they will leave them. A piece of rag well soaked in a strong solution of cayenne is a capital thing to put into rat or mice holes, as they will not attempt to eat it. A plug of wood covered with a piece of flannel so prepared may be used to fill up the holes. Cockroaches and ants have a similar dislike to cayenne, and a little strewed about a cellar will keep it clear of them.

SUN CLOCKS.—A clock at Brussels has been going for eight months, and has not required to be wound up since it was first set agoing. In fact, the sun does the winding of this timepiece. A shaft exposed to the sun causes an up-draught of air which sets a fan in motion. The fan actuates mechanism which raises the weight of the clock until it reaches the top, and then puts a brake on the fan until the weight has gone down a little, when the fan is again liberated and proceeds to act as before.

Farm and Garden.

SHEEP.—Sheep husbandry is well worth considering on account of its peculiar adaptability for association with all branches of agriculture. A well-selected flock will, in a majority of instances, add to the value of grain and grass crops, while adding in other directions to the profit side of the balance-sheet.

THE HORSE.—A noted Arab chieftain who thoroughly understood horse-flesh, always maintained that the two great enemies of the horse were rest and fat. Until recently the contrary opinion was held in this country, but it is now becoming recognized that the inactive overfed steed is not a desirable sire. The progeny of a sire in moderate flesh, with muscles hard and body strong from vigorous exercise, will be a superior race of colts.

HICKORY.—An old experienced farmer says that hickory cut in July or August will not become worm-eaten. Oak, chestnut, walnut, or other timber cut from the middle of July to the last of August will last twice as long as when cut in winter. White oak cut at this season, if kept off the ground, will season through if two feet in diameter, and remain perfectly sound for many years; whereas if cut in winter or spring it will become sap-rotten in a few years.

ASHES.—Wood ashes are one of the most valuable fertilizers that a farmer can apply to his soil. For root crops of all kinds, grasses, clover, etc., they will be found just what is needed to stimulate and feed the crop. The ash is the mineral element of any vegetable structure, and, therefore, indispensable to its growth. The farmer who will sell his ashes is actually parting with so much of the fertility of his farm. As an application to reclaim marsh land, the effect of ashes is often wonderful.

NUT-BEARING TREES.—The idea of planting edible nut-bearing trees where shade is desired instead of those which are solely ornamental, is not new, but the suggestion is one that will bear thinking about by those who contemplate planting shade or ornamental trees. Chestnut, walnut, hickorynut and butternut trees are all nearly as fine in appearance as horse chestnut and maple, and, aside from the source of revenue which will in time accrue to their owners from the fruit, the timber of such trees is always in demand, and the tree itself may become profitable should it become desirable at any time to remove it.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 2, 1885.

Purity, Progress, Pleasure and Permanence are conspicuously ineffaceable features written by the finger of Time on the venerable record of this paper. To the thousands who have drawn many of their noblest thoughts and much of their sweetest enjoyment from its familiar columns, in the two generations covering its history, renewed assurances of devotion to their gratification and improvement are superfluous. THE SATURDAY EVENING POST exists solely to serve the best interests and promote the truest pleasures of its patrons and readers. It hopes to constantly deserve the unswerving approval of its great army of old and new friends. It aspires to no higher ambition. To accomplish this, nothing shall impede the way. The best productions of the noblest thinkers and the finest writers will fill its columns, and the unwearied energies of the most careful editors shall be continuously devoted to its preparation. Nothing impure or debasing will be permitted to defile its pages nor make them an unworthy visitor to any home. The most Graphic Narrations, Instructive Sketches, Fascinating Stories, Important Biographical Essays, Striking Events, Best Historical Descriptions, Latest Scientific Discoveries, and other attractive features adapted to every portion of the family circle, will appear from week to week, while the Domestic, Social, Fashion and Correspondence Departments will be maintained at the highest possible standard of excellence. Its sole aim is to furnish its subscribers with an economical and never-failing supply of happiness and instruction, which shall be as necessary to their existence as the air they breathe. While myriads of silken threads in the web of memory stretch far back in the history of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, it will never rest on past laurels, but keep fully abreast of all genuine progress in the spirit of the age in which the present generation lives. It earnestly seeks and highly appreciates the favor and friendship of the pure and good everywhere, but desires no affiliation with, nor characteristic approval from, their opposites.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST,
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Our Household Affairs.

The old, old SATURDAY EVENING POST, which has been the welcome friend in so many happy homes for two generations, delights to present itself to-day in improved garb, and more presentable make-up. Its conductors venture to hope the slight changes made may not be displeasing to their numerous subscribers, and that the improvements may add to the comfort and satisfaction of all their readers. The neat and distinct title heading, which emphasises the venerable date of the paper's birth, finds appropriate ornament in the surrounding border rules that add an air of finish to the whole make-up which may excite pardonable pride in an excellent appearance. Even the most staid people come to look a little obsolete and shabby after long wear of unchanged dress, and need occasional re-habilitation, without laying themselves liable to classification as frivolous devotees of fashion. We hope our new appearance may aid in fixing the oldest literary and family paper in America more firmly in the affections of its readers. While memory's fond recollections naturally turn our thoughts towards the glorious past, when THE SATURDAY EVENING POST stood alone in its chosen field, long years before this modern brood of periodical bantlings swarmed the land like the lice of Egypt, working filth and destruction, we have ambitious hopes for the future, and still believe that the pure and progressive family paper will receive its full measure of substantial support, in proportion as it remains true to noble purposes, and free from contaminating influences. We earnestly wish that everyone whose eyes rest on these lines could share our own enthusiasm on this subject. Improvement and progress are merely the stepping stones to accomplish greater good and afford more fascinating pleasures. It is in this spirit that we enter upon them. We hope to furnish our readers with the choicest new and original literature extant, whose merits shall outstrip competition, if such a thing were possible, and make the weekly visit of this paper the most instructive and welcome event of the whole week in the homes where it is received. Will not all our friends lend us whatever assistance may be in their power to both increase our subscription list and extend the usefulness of THE OLD SATURDAY EVENING POST?

Ennobling Work of Grief and Joy.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity," seems a hard thing to realize by those who are in the throes of physical agony, or enduring the pressure of financial straits, or undergoing the torture of mental distraction, yet its subsequent effects upon the life and character of the sufferers, and their influence on others, often demonstrates the absolute truthfulness of the maxim. It is difficult to determine just how the pruning knife of adversity and self-denial should produce greater happiness, but the fact is almost universally shown in human experience. It is the parallel in mental and moral nature, of severe training in the physical life, to produce greater powers of strength and endurance. The recent sufferings of General Grant, which have so harrowed up the feelings of the American people, and drawn such demonstrations of interest and sympathy from other nations, would appear at first consideration to be one bitter cup of unmixed woe to patient and people alike. Yet, when viewed in the lapse of time, after the blinding tears of sorrow are wiped away, many elevating influences result from their occurrence that could come by no other means. The patient endurance of the heroic spirit under the most trying mental and physical sufferings has touched the better nature in myriads of hearts, many of whom have cherished life-long sentiments in direct opposition to his, yet now pour out sincerest expressions of sympathy, which nothing else could have elicited. The power of grief subdues the most envenomed bickering, and robs the shafts of envy of all their poison, while the whole people unite in one common bond of sympathy. It is the great leveller of all artificial distinctions in the human family, and fulfils a noble mission of elevating influences that could come from no other source. The Angel of Joy, although antipodal in nature, produces similar effects, and is more gladly welcomed, because the poignancy of present suffering is not a necessary concomitant to her journey through the world. Although the effects of joy may be more transient, and the permanent benefits not so lasting as those of grief, yet she is a blessing that the race could ill afford to spare. A bevy of children, who are possessed of nearly all the perverse qualities human nature is prone to, so as to stand out most disagreeably in every-day life, will so yield to gentle influences on occasions of special joy, when hearts seem to overflow with good will and kindly impulses, so as to make envy, or avarice, or selfishness, look hateful and hideous, and cause those who are afflicted with them to loathe their indulgence with abhorrence. The same is true with people of mature years. The presence of joy drives out the baser feelings that drag down and degrade. Let us, then, take our griefs with submission, and cherish our joys with alacrity, so that no vacuums may be left for the demons that lurk in every corner, to occupy.

Change and Monotony.

While some will never submit to any monotony, but live in a continual rush of changes, thereby blunting the power for good of any change, others are so concentrated in their thoughts and feelings that they find it impossible to direct them into any unaccustomed channel when the proper time comes. They have by constant habit become so wedded to monotony that they have lost the power to appreciate the natural and legitimate delights of change. Wherever they go they carry their burdens and cares with them. In the midst of all nature's charms they have neither eye for her beauties nor ear for her harmonies; they are living over and over again their business details, regretting past mistakes, making new plans—living, in fact, the same monotonous life that they did all the preceding months. Their vocation is a mere hyphen, nothing in itself, and only used to connect what has been with what will be.

Worn-out Men.

Life is too short to waste either in idleness or over-work. Some men work too little, and lose their health by inactivity—by the lack of sufficient exertion to keep the body in good condition. Others ruin their constitutions by over-work; and among this class are the thrifty business men who, in their prosperous career, are making money so rapidly that they begrudge the time for a little necessary recreation. All their lives are spent in devising ways and means to increase their store of this world's goods; and thus from year to year they go on, the waste of strength and vitality being so gradual and imperceptible to themselves that they are unmindful of it until it is too late for diversion to effect any permanent improvement. Then, utterly worn out, they withdraw from active business for a few weeks or months, and learn to their sorrow that they have deferred the period of enjoyment too long.

LIFE insurance companies are careful to inquire into the habits of those that apply for policies. The latter are asked if stimulants are regularly taken, and also as to the use of tobacco and opium. Some of the companies have added chloral to the list of the inhibited articles. It seems the chloral habit is steadily on the increase, not only from sufferers from sleeplessness, but from persons who are irritable and excitable, and broken down from late hours and dissipation. The nepenthe is more alluring to sensitive and refined people than is opium, and the habit once formed is more difficult to cure than the opium habit, or even drunkenness. Anæsthetics have done much to alleviate human suffering, but, unfortunately, the invention of chloral has brought into existence a new and alarming form of drunkenness. The physician who recommends this seductive drug should be held to a stern accountability if its patients thereby acquire a pernicious habit which they cannot break off.

THE fate of nations and men often turn on the merest trifles. It would be curious if the destiny of England and Egypt was to be materially affected by the presence of two warts on the cheek of a Khartoum ship's carpenter. In his address to the Soudanese, El Madhi wrote: "Has not God Himself given me the signs of my mission—the two warts on the left cheek which are spoken of in His book?" This cogent reasoning would seem to have had its effect, for the officers of the Kordofan army declare that the Madhi "has on his right cheek a wart and other signs which are written in the books of the law." There is, it is true, a grave discrepancy as to the position of the warts; but it might, nevertheless, have been better for the peace of the world if Mohamed Ahmed had been born without any warts at all.

A PRIVATE in an English infantry regiment receives 25 cents a day; a lancer corporal 31 cents; corporal, 41 cents; lancer sergeant, 50 cents; sergeant, 58 cents; color sergeant, 75 cents; and quartermaster sergeant, $1. These rates are subject to the following deductions, viz.: One cent a day for washing, and six cents a day for groceries and vegetables. These consist of tea, coffee, sugar, potatoes and green vegetables. After these deductions, then, the pay of a linesman is 17 cents a day, but, as he has to provide his own underclothing, a further deduction of two cents daily is made, thus reducing his actual pay to 15 cents. The pay of the privates in the famous Coldstream Guards averages only about 10 per cent. in advance of these rates, with equal deductions for messing and washing.

To prevent delay in sending fire alarms, cards telling where the nearest alarm box is located, and how to get the key, are to be tacked up by order of the Fire Commissioners in a conspicuous place in all the dwellings, hotels, factories, etc., of New York city.

The World's Happenings.

There are about 1,500,000 slaves in Brazil.

Few towns in England under 20,000 inhabitants can boast a daily newspaper.

The custom of appointing an arbor day now prevails in eight States of the Union.

The three last lord chancellors of England have all been Sunday-school teachers.

The barbers are almost alone among the tradesmen in the United States in having no union.

A Nebraska City man has been arrested and fined $9.70 for using profane language on the street.

Four beavers with a heavy sixteen-foot timber in tow were seen recently on a California stream.

The number of mules attached to the hearse denotes the respectability of a funeral at Rio Janeiro.

A freak of nature in the form of an eight-legged calf is among the stock owned by a Chester, N. J., man.

Some genius has invented a fishing-rod that registers the precise number and weight of the fishes caught.

A Cincinnati gambler, who in his time had won and lost $200,000, died among the paupers the other day.

Two daughters of the King of Sweden were dangerously ill a few weeks ago from wall-paper poisoning.

A farmer near Danville, Ill., planted 70 acres with oats, last winter, sowing them broadcast over the snow.

A request was made by a citizen of Hoboken, N. J., who died recently, that his body be dissected and then cremated.

A medical writer asserts that the lumbermen of Maine are free from dyspepsia because they chew spruce gum almost constantly.

Children grow taller, it is stated, after an acute sickness, such as fever, the growth of the bones being stimulated by the febrile condition.

Smokers, an eminent New York surgeon is quoted as saying, have virtually nothing to fear from cancer as a result of the use of tobacco.

Men were cutting ice on one of the ponds in Woburn, Mass., a few weeks ago, while robins were singing merrily in the trees on the shore.

The loss of her sight has resulted in the case of a Matoon, Ill., woman, who for a length of time looked at snow upon which the sun shone.

In St. Mary county, Md., the other day, one colored man shot at another with a revolver, the ball striking squarely in the forehead and glancing off without inflicting any serious wound.

The Church of the Holy Ghost, at Heidelberg, Germany, is divided by a partition running lengthwise through it. On the one side the service is Protestant, and on the other Catholic.

A railboat on Indian River, that was made with a hatchet and pocket-knife, is one of the real curiosities of Florida. The sails are a pair of blankets, and are used for covering at night.

A young woman has applied to the Civil Service Examiners of Brooklyn to enter the examination for a clerk and stenographer in the tax department.

The combined ages of five brothers and one sister who live in Hart county, Ga., are 471 years, the oldest a male, being 92, and the youngest, the female, 68.

Colored people, to the number of 1000, are said to own $5,000 worth of property in Washington. At least 50 are worth $10,000, and 100 are worth over $25,000.

A Madrid man has invented a cane that contains a complete set of topographical and telegraphic instruments, a heliograph and a lantern. It is intended for the use of engineers in the army service.

Of all the names for newspapers Kansas leads in oddity. We have the "Prairie Dog," the "Astonisher and Parrilizer," and now a paper is to be started in Thomas county, to be called the "Thomas Cat."

A figure of his hound, who was with him at the time, finely cut in granite, is the memorial to be placed at the grave of a Mount Vernon, N. H., man who accidentally shot himself while hunting, a couple of years ago.

Among the immigrants who passed through Pittsburg, recently, were four children ranging in age from eight to twelve years, who were bound for St. Louis, and had traveled by themselves all the way from Germany.

The new paper bottles hold out a hope that druggists will be able to furnish them free of charge, as they now provide wrapping paper, to buyers. The cementing material withstands the action of water, wine and alcohol.

Small feet being the subject of a controversy in New York, a venerable participant writes to a paper there: "I have the smallest feet in New York of any grown lady, pronounced so by my shoemaker. I wear No. 12, children's size, and I am a grandmother."

A life prisoner in the penitentiary at Charleston, Mass., claims to have a bullet in his head which he can feel move whenever he shakes his cranium. He has sold his head to a doctor for $15, with the proviso that he is to keep it until his life sentence has expired.

Through several administrations the same plate has been used for the printing of vice-presidential cards. No name except "The Vice-President" is used by the man occupying that position, so when a new person comes into the office he simply orders new cards from the old plate.

April fool jokes sometimes are not wholly a bad thing, as a Lawrence, Mass., man found, who lost on the street a pocket-book containing $62. Several passers-by winked knowingly at each other and carefully let it alone, so that when the owner retraced his steps half an hour later he found it just where he dropped it.

HEARTS AND FLOWERS.

BY WILLIAM MACKINTOSH.

Now the bright and floral Kingdom's glory,
O'er field and garden in profusion spreads,
So we may read each flowret's simple story
And why they rear their ever welcome heads.

'Tis to delight and add unto our pleasure,
To please they spend their fragrance and their bloom,
And this they grant in full unstinted measure,
Till Winter lays them in a drowsy tomb,
Then we lament to see them fall a prey,
But their sweet memory never dies away.

Some noble lives remind us of the flowers,
Their beauty bids the gloomy bosom cheer,
To please and bless they spend life's fleeting hours,
And shed a glory round our pathway here;
So when their gone, they're wept, and cherished be
And leave a fragrance that shall never die.

How Like a Woman!

BY JOHN GRAY.

NIGHT. Afar the occasional boom of heavy guns, and the frequent flash of light, as some shell darted on its destructive way. Near at hand the rumble of vehicles bearing wounded men to where they might receive attention; and the sighs and groans elicited by fever and pain.

Egerton Blunt lay wakefully on his rough couch, his thoughts wandering where they would, independent of his own will, sometimes circling about a mental picture of a straight, well-made man, rather beyond middle-age, with hair prematurely white crowning a face still smooth; sometimes dwelling on the horrors through which he had lately passed.

"Avice!"

The word scattered his train of thought, though he hardly knew whether he had heard it spoken, or whether it was another of the fancies of his excited brain. He knew no one by that name and yet it seemed familiar. Who was Avice? Was she——

"Avice, darling! Don't leave me, Avice. I——"

The voice died away. There were no doubt about it now. The name sounded clearly in the momentary silence, and caused more than one weary watcher to turn his head.

Egerton Blunt, knowing now that it proceeded from the bed next to his, felt a thrill of pity. He had talked the previous day to the young man who lay there mortally wounded; had felt interested in his haggard pallid face, with its large sunken eyes so feverishly bright. Perhaps he had thought more of it from the fact, that among so many strangers, this was a countryman of his own.

He half raised himself and looked at his neighbor, who still continued to mutter, either in sleep or delirium, then sank back with a heavy sigh.

"Poor girl, whoever she is," he thought; "there is sad news for her at no distant date."

And then rose before him another picture, that of a dark-eyed dark-haired maiden, whose cheek might even now be blanched for his safety. And "Hope" was the name on which he softly breathed a blessing that night.

The carts outside were heard less frequently, the darkness grew more intense in spite of the swinging lamps. And before long Blunt sank into a disturbed sleep, the pain of his own fractured leg and the moans of other sufferers mingling strangely with his dreams.

Morning broke and found him still sleeping. The surgeon on his hurried rounds looked approvingly for an instant and nodded, satisfied; but removing his eyes to the next bed, his face became graver; he shrugged his shoulders and flung out his hands with a gesture that said plainly enough, "I can do nothing here."

Later in the day, when the distant thunder was loud and incessant, Blunt, lost in a reverie, started, as he heard himself addressed again in English:

"Are you asleep?"

"No;" and he instantly raised himself on his elbow, so that he could look at the speaker.

"*You* will get over this," said the latter, firmly, as he looked wistfully at the other's pale, earnest face.

"And you too, I hope," Blunt answered, cheerily; but the other only shook his head.

"The next time you go to sleep," he said, with an effort, "you will wake to find some one else in my place. A few more hours only——"

Blunt tried to contradict him, but seeing what he saw, he could not.

"You want to ask something of me," he said, correctly reading those restless eyes.

The young man nodded in token of assent, and then lay for awhile silent.

"I will do anything in my power, my poor fellow," said Blunt, after waiting to hear more without result. "Is it some message to your friends?"

"Friends!" repeated Anson, in a tone of bitterness. "I have none!"

"You have *one*, if you will accept him. Trust me, I will perform faithfully anything you like to ask me—that is, if I get out of this and you don't."

"A letter and a message I want to send," said Anson, his hollow eyes full of eagerness. "You will take both?"

"If I live."

There was another pause, during which Blunt lay back and waited.

A slight rustle of paper followed.

"Here it is."

He stretched out his hand sideways, and felt something placed within it; but when he would have withdrawn it; he could not for the clasp of the hot, nervous fingers.

"She is in England," said Anson, at last as his grasp relaxed—"in London."

"Ah! my old father lives in London too. But you have not given me the message."

"Read the address on the letter," Anson murmured, without heeding the last question.

Blunt obeyed, and read aloud:

"'Miss Avice Underwood, 8, Alva Square, Chelsea.' Is that right?"

"Quite."

After that Sydney Anson was silent, and Blunt forebore to question him, but waited patiently for what might follow.

Perhaps half an hour had passed before the subject was resumed.

"I want you to see her; to tell her how I died here in this vile hospital, amongst strangers, smashed to pieces."

Blunt raised his head as he broke off, and stared, the tone was so different from what he had anticipated—so full of agitation, of bitter intensity.

"Tell her," went on Anson, the fingers of his one uninjured arm tightening upon the coverlid," that I died as I have lived; that I carried my hatred to the grave. Tell her that my last prayer was that she might know what it was to suffer as I have suffered, and that her false heart may break under that suffering as, if hearts can break, mine has broken!"

He was so excited—his passion lent to his weak, failing voice so much strength—that several more occupants of the ward turned their heads, or incapable of that, their eyes towards him. He saw it and became silent.

"This is a strange request," said Egerton, after thinking it over.

"You think I am mad," Anson answered, in a faint, exhausted way. "But you will do it?"

"In your wanderings last night you spoke this name—Avice—in a different way, I thought that she was——"

Blunt heard a stifled sob, knew that the poor fellow was quite unmanned, felt full sympathy, and held his tongue. He guessed the story—a fair face and love of admiration; a young and passionate lover. That was all.

Some hours later he tried to renew the subject.

"Anson," he said, in a low voice, "send her the letter, she deserves it. But forgive her before—try and forgive her!"

The other was past. He lay perfectly still—his eyes dim with pain, his hand clenched on the covering of the bed. Egerton Blunt looked at him anxiously, feeling much as though about to lose a friend.

In spite of the pain and risk involved in such a proceeding, he struggled to a sitting position, and scanned the whole length of the ward in the hope of seeing some nurse or doctor, but neither was visible.

He was helpless—he could do nothing but wait and look on, groaning within himself at his inability to stay that ebbing tide. He could only lean across and, put back the hair from his brow, try by touches of womanly gentleness to show his sympathy. He could not have told why the fate of this poor fellow interested him so much for he had seen deaths enough of late. Perhaps his own wound had weakened and softened him, for the expressive look he received from those expressive blue eyes brought tears into his own.

He lay down again at last, and listened for some approaching step; and as the minutes slipped by, before he was aware of it, drowsiness again overtook him, and he slept.

He was aroused by the surgeon, intent on examining, and if necessary, re-dressing his broken limb.

"At last!" he said, in a tone of relief. "I thought you would never come. What d'you think of him now?"

He made a motion with his hand toward Anson's bed, and the doctor, who understood but little English, looked half puzzled; then, catching the other's meaning, made some pretence of not comprehending, and busied himself in his work.

As soon as he moved away Blunt turned towards his right, and started with surprise. Instead of the fair, curling hair, lank black waves contrasted with the pillow; and as the occupant raised his head he showed the hard rugged features of a man of forty.

He had not expected it so soon. It was a shock, though he had known from the first that this was one of the many hopeless cases.

It seemed to him as though he had been guilty of the greatest cruelty in letting this poor countryman of his quit the world without a farewell or hand-clasp, in sleeping for hours so soundly that he had not heard anything of what had passed in the interim.

He felt for the letter. That, at least, remained to tell him that this was not all some strange and fevered dream.

* * * * * *

"Soon at work again, Egerton!"

"Yes, father, daubing as usual. Smell? Oh, it's only linseed oil!" and the speaker drew forward a chair for his father, who sat down and watched his active brush as he had not done since his son went to study his art in France.

He was silent, thinking of the dangers the young man had passed through since he left home—he having volunteered, with many another artist, in the defence of Paris the previous winter.

"Have you seen Hope Norris lately?" asked Egerton, as he breathed on his canvas to see if it were dry.

"Not very lately," said his father. "She is sure to be at the Underwoods' to-night."

"At the—*what* name did you say?" And he stepped back from his easel to turn his eyes on his father, half shutting them, as though the old man were a picture and could best be seen by that method.

"Underwood. Their 'at home.' I told you, did I not? and you said you would go with me."

"Yes, but you did not mention the name. Who are they?"

"Friends of the Norrises. Old Underwood is *the* Underwood—you know.

"Oh," said Egerton, retreating farther, and surveying his canvas from a distance. "Is it far?"

"Chelsea only. Alva Square, No. 8."

Mr. Blunt was screwing and unscrewing the lid of a tube of color, or he would have seen his son's face change, as he muttered to himself:

"By George! how odd!"

"What's that, Egerton?"

"Any family, did you say, sir?"

"Yes. Two grown-up daughters—one away from home; and some boys at school I believe. Avice Underwood is a great deal at the Norrises'. I've often seen her there."

"Avice!"

"Odd name, isn't it? A nice girl, very!"

"Ah! Father, come over here; there, that's a good light—no, a little more this way! What do you think of it now? What on earth am I to call it?"

That evening the father and son presented themselves at 8 Alva Square. The elder man soon found his way through the groups of visitors to where a pale, quiet-looking girl, in some soft, creamy-white dress, was standing a little apart.

"How are you, dear?" he said, taking her hand in a fatherly way, and holding it for a minute. "I thought we should find you here."

"*We!*" she repeated. "Whom have you brought with you?"

"Why, Egerton, of course. He has just come home. I thought he was following," and he looked round the room.

When his glance came back, it rested on a complete transformation. Instead of a pale, listless, almost plain face, here was one glowing with color and animation, with brown eyes sparkling, red lips curving into a smile.

"How glad you must be, Mr. Blunt! Then you will have him home for Christmas?"

"Yes. Poor lad! he looked a little pulled down; but he'll soon come round. Where is he? My eyes get worse than ever! Can you see him, Hope?"

"He is in the next room, talking to Avice. They are coming this way," Hope answered.

"Oh, Miss Norris, I want to introduce you to——" and she was borne off by a friend, while Mr. Blunt watched her slim, graceful figure gliding away between florid middle-aged ladies, and uninteresting elderly gentlemen.

Then he discovered an acquaintance among the elderly gentlemen, caught his eye, and so on forgot Hope, and even Egerton, in an exciting conversation on wines.

The artist was in clover. He was still with Avice Underwood, chatting pleasantly the while he stored his memory with her features, complexion, figure, and hair. If only he might paint her!

She was very pretty, at times almost lovely, and possessed the art of setting herself off to the best advantage with no artificial aid beyond that of tasteful dress. She knew exactly where the loose knot of her hair rested most becomingly, and could arrange the front tresses, ruthlessly cut short, into the most artlessly-irregular waves and curls.

Looking at her, Egerton Blunt did not wonder that Anson had loved. But surely a voice so low and sweet could never speak anything false or cruel; eyes so clear and blue, under their soft shade of long lashes, could never look love that they did not feel!

In ten minutes he had decided not to give her the letter to-night, but to do it with such softening as he could at some more suitable time. The idea he had cherished of punishing a heartless flirt vanished under her smile like a mist before the sun.

She soon left him to divide herself, as daughter of the house, equally among the guests.

The artist remained for a little where she had left him; and then, though unobserved, he colored with shame—shame that he had been thinking something which was very like treason—treason to—

He raised his eyes, and they encountered another pair distant the whole length of the large drawing-room. The other pair were hastily lowered, but he sauntered with an air of indifference in their direction.

Hope's friend had forsaken her again. Egerton found her for the moment alone: and for at least a quarter of an hour she was in the seventh heaven.

Then Mr. Blunt joined them, very well content to see them together.

"Miss Underwood is a friend of yours, I believe?" asked the artist, as Avice came within his range of vision.

Hope inclined her head, and asked:

"Why?"

"I only wondered what she was like. I have heard something of her not very flattering. But if you like her, it cannot be true."

"No one can help liking her," said Hope, with a half sigh, as she glanced for a minute towards where the subject of conversation was exchanging low-toned words with a handsome, youngish man, who leaned towards her in a decidedly admiring way regardless of observers.

"Who is that cad?" whispered Egerton to his father, with a quick sense of dislike.

Mr. Blunt did not know, neither did Hope, whose ears were quick enough to catch the question.

The time for leaving was too soon at hand, as far as one or two of the guests were concerned. A few words at parting were all that passed between Egerton and Avice Underwood, and yet he left with a vague and flattering sense that she liked him—that they were already on very good terms.

"Am I to congratulate you, my dear boy?" his father asked, when he bade his son good night.

"Not just yet, father," Egerton responded, flushing.

"She is very sweet and womanly, Egerton?"

"Very. Not a bit altered. Good night, sir."

He thought much that night of his promise to poor Anson, and he resolved to fulfil it the next day and so get it off his mind. Avice was certainly very lovely, but on cool reflection that did not make her less culpable. He would steel himself with the memory of that poor fellow's wan face, and would deal the blow.

The morning found him in the same mind, and in the afternoon he set forth to carry out his intention.

* * * * *

Christmas Eve, and a party, including Avice Underwood and Egerton Blunt, were decorating the church to the congregation of which they belonged. The latter took not the smallest interest in decorations of any kind, but he took a great deal in Avice, and was only too happy to wreathe pillars with green stuff under her directions, or to "do" the difficult parts of the pulpit, and be rewarded by her smile.

He had not yet kept his word with regard to her, though many times he had sought her with his mind made up—on one occasion to find her out, on another to be disarmed by a manner so gentle that he shrank from saying anything that might hurt her.

Egerton was very dissatisfied with himself at this period, and his work was at a standstill. He was growing to look worn and restless, for whenever not actively occupied the memory of Anson intruded on his thoughts; or certain words, looks, and tones of his own, long since bestowed on Hope Norris, recurred with troublesome persistency.

The church was gradually emptying. Avice passed by Egerton, and said over her shoulder as she went, in a low tone:

"I am going into the vestry to warm myself by the fire before I leave."

That being a very plain hint that he might follow her, Blunt profited by it at once. He found her alone, standing by the stove, and drawing on a pair of many-buttoned gloves.

"You are going already, Avice?" he asked, receiving no reproof for the use of the Christian name. "May I see you home?"

"If you like," she said, softly, and held out her hand for him to button her glove, which he did with alacrity, yet contriving to make the task take some time. When the last hole had admitted its tiny button, he took the gloved hand and held it in his own. He was about to speak when the door was opened and some more of the decorators entered.

"I am ready," she said, withdrawing her hand and slipping it into her muff, and they went out together.

It was snowing fast, but Avice would not hear his suggestion of a cab, so she accepted his arm, and allowed him to hold his umbrella over both.

She laughed and talked merrily, turning aside all Blunt's attempts to take a more tender tone. He gave up at last, and entered into her own mood, thinking that she had never looked so lovely as now, her fair face contrasted with its nest of dark fur, her yellow hair blowing in the wintry breeze.

Both were so intent on each other that they never even saw who passed them in the snow, with her brown, wistful eyes taking them both in in one quick glance.

Hope went on her way, with her umbrella held low, and her feet a little unsteady, and no one but herself ever knew of that meeting.

"I shall see you to-night at the Norrises'?" he asked, standing with Avice for a minute in the porch when they had reached No. 8. "In case I should not have an opportunity to give them to you, here are those tickets of which we were speaking."

He opened his pocket-book, and turning over the contents, came upon the letter he had had entrusted to him. "Miss Avice Underwood!"

The interior of the hospital rose before his mind's eye. He saw the rows of wounded men—one with light hair, and his face hidden in the pillow.

"Can you not find them? Never mind."

Avice's voice roused him to himself.

"They are here. I hope some of you will be able to use them. Good-by, Avice.

She let him hold her hand, and looked up to meet his ardent gaze, and return it fully, with a long look that sent him away with the certainty in his heart, "She loves me."

She loved him! And yet he was not happy. He had to assure himself again and again that he had never said a word more than any friend might utter to Hope Norris; and even when he succeeded in believing it, the dead man's letter would come into his mind like a warning.

They were only a small party that Christmas-eve: Jack Norris (Hope's cousin), Avice, her father and mother, the two Blunts (father and son), and three or four others.

Hope looked so bright and busy that he at once dismissed all uneasiness with regard to her happiness, though at the same time he felt lowered before her straight, frank look.

Avice had resumed the manner which seemed to make it necessary to address her as Miss Underwood. She talked with him in a pleasant and cordial manner without

embarrassment. They danced together once or twice, for a little carpet-dance was organized.

Egerton was sufficiently sensitive to notice a little formality and coldness on the part of all the Norris family save Hope, and he knew that his father watched him furtively this evening, as though seeking in his conduct confirmation or contradiction of some unpleasant doubts.

But he told himself he did not care, and when he led Hope to her seat, after whirling her around in a dreamy waltz, his eyes at once sought Avice; and finding her not, his manner became abstracted and inattentive.

At the first opportunity, needle-like he gravitated towards his magnet. Out of the room where he was, opened another; and beyond this, and only shut off by heavy curtains, another smaller one. Without doubt some of the guests had filtered out into the other rooms. But no; the first, when he entered it, was empty, and no sound of voices came from beyond the curtains.

However, just to make sure, he laid his hands on the rich velvet folds, and drew them aside. Within were two persons only—Avice, and Hope's cousin Jack Norris. He heard no words, but what he saw was enough—a clinging embrace, a passionate kiss given and returned!

He stepped back unseen, and the folds fell noiselessly together once more. The furniture seemed to move around him, the floor seemed to rise and fall. He had to rest his hand on the chimney-board to steady himself, and so stood looking into the fire.

Only for a few minutes though, ere Avice's voice, close at hand, said, "We shall be missed," they were passing.

Blunt turned round, his resolution taken.

"Stay a minute, Miss Underwood. I have something to tell you."

"Certainly," she said, smiling, and relinquishing Norris's arm. "Don't wait Mr. Norris."

She stood under the holly and mistletoe-wreathed gasolier, one white arm resting on the back of a chair, her fan held lightly dangling, her eyes turned with interest on his pale face.

"I have a letter for you," he began, slowly, compelling himself to speak with polite composure, and producing the missive from his pocket-book, he handed it to her. "I should have given it to you before, but——Do you recognize the writing?"

"Yes," and she blushed and smiled slightly; "it is that of someone I used to know. Thank you; I will read it by-and-by."

"Oblige me by reading it now," he said, in a manner so cold and stern that her smile vanished.

"Of course I will, if you wish it," she answered, with a reproachful glance, and her hand trembled a little as she tore open the envelope. "But you need not speak to me like that."

Egerton watched her with brows contracted and eyes half closed as she read. The quiver of her lips and the blanching cheeks did not escape him, but there was no softening in the lines of his face or in the stern look he bent upon her.

"It is a cruel letter," she faltered, folding it again. "How did it come into your possession?"

"I was with him when he was dying, in a military hospital at Paris," Egerton replied, with unpitying severity. "His last prayer was that I would find you, tell you how he died, cruelly shattered, far from all who knew or cared for him. He said more but—but," he paused, and tried to exercise his memory, but in vain. He dazed, confused, and could only end vaguely, "I forget the rest."

Avice had hid her face in a dainty lace-edged piece of cambric, and her shoulders shook with a sob or two.

At that minute Hope came in, and looked wonderingly from criminal to judge, and back again. Then she passed her arm around Avice and kissed her.

"Come up to my room and bathe your eyes," she whispered; without a look at Egerton, she led her away.

He remained where he was, forgetting time and place. It was with quite a start he roused himself; he had been again leaning against the chimney-piece and looking into the fire, when a hand touched his arm.

"You will be missed," said Hope's sympathetic voice. "It is a pity to let this attract attention."

"I am cured, Hope," and he passed his hand over his brow. "Quite cured. Shall we go back then?"

The first person who met their eyes on entering the drawing-room was Avice herself, the centre of an admiring group of the opposite sex, relating some amusing experience with just enough confusion at being the object of so much attention to make her doubly attractive. Egerton laughed bitterly.

"How like a woman!" he said, under his breath. "Well I have learned a lesson."

"What is it?" Hope asked.

"I did not know I spoke aloud, Miss Norris. Never mind what it is. At any rate I have it *now by heart*."

"If it makes you look like that, I hope you will soon unlearn it" said Hope. "You have yet another to learn—this: not to judge all the world by your experience of one individual."

She quitted his side with heightened color, and avoided him until he came to say good-bye.

"Egerton," said his father, sadly, when they parted for the night, "you have greatly disappointed me."

"I have greatly disappointed myself," he said, coldly; and then relenting as he saw the old man's look, he laid his hand gently on his shoulder. "It is over now. Listen, father. The bells. It is Christmas-day. I wish you a merry Christmas and many of them."

"And I you, my dear boy. Good night."

In the morning they went together to church, and coming out he found himself by Hope's side.

Their respective fathers were walking on ahead in a harmless conspiracy. Hope was very silent.

After extracting nothing but monosyllables for about half a mile, Egerton said, in a different tone:

"I see you are angry with me, and with reason. I despise myself so much that I should not have spoken to you, but that accident threw us together. But for the season's sake, Hope, forgive me and forget the past."

"That is easy," she said, averting her face. "Consider it done."

"You are very merciful," said Egerton. "With that assurance I will venture to tell you something. Six months—a year hence, when I have proved myself worthy of your trust—no, I'll speak out now, and know the worst. Hope, you are the sweetest and truest little girl I ever met. Will you take a poor, despicable, contemptible idiot for your husband? Will you overlook his despising you for a shallow coquette, neglecting you, forgetting you, and with all this before you, confide yourself to his keeping? Will you trust me, Hope in spite of all this, for the season's sake? What is the use of my saying that you are dearer to me than all the world beside! I can't expect you to believe."

"If you were ten times as bad as you say, it would make no difference to me," said Hope, in a low voice. "You are very kind. You are denied her, so you will try and put up with me. Very condescending!"

"Have I not humbled myself enough?" he exclaimed. "Do you think I do not despise myself enough? Be yourself, Hope, and answer me frankly."

"Egerton you are so blind," she said, laughing with tears in her eyes. "Women are very weak, you know. You taught me to love you before ever you went away, and I have never altered, and never shall—not for your virtues, or for your faults, but for yourself."

He was too much touched to answer at once, but drew her little hand through his arm.

Walking in this way they turned a corner, and came upon Avice Underwood with a young man whom neither had seen before.

"Merry Christmas to you both," she said, laughing as they went by.

Blunt turned to Hope, and told her the story of Sydney Anson.

All a Mistake.

BY PERCY VERE.

FROM cellar to garret floated delicious odors.

And flitting busily at her mother's side in the great clean kitchen, was the blooming Ivy Sunderland.

Over her crimson merino was tied a large white apron, which was only assumed when some important household festivity seemed to command preparation.

"There, mother," she said, placing a plum-cake on the table with a triumphant flourish, "that's the last; and now I'll attack the parlor."

"I wouldn't to-night, dear," said Mrs. Sunderland. "You'll tire yourself out. There'll be plenty of time in the morning."

"Oh, no, mother. I promised to be at church early. And I thought if I could snatch an hour sometime between now and then, that I'd finish off my blue silk. Julia Hunt said she might be over after dinner, and bring her cousin with her. And then," she added with a rather overdone attempt at carelessness, "it's possible Joseph Dalton may be here in the evening."

"H'm!" said Mrs. Sunderland, a little surprised; "and when did you hear from him?"

"Oh, not since he left in the summer. But he told me then, that he intended to pass Christmas at the squire's, and that if he did, he'd give us a call. But really I must begin at the parlor."

And into the parlor she went, a curiously happy light on her face, while she dusted the quaint old spindle-legged piano, and polished the mirror between the windows, and rubbed the brass fireirons till they shone again.

Perhaps it was all to please Julia Hunt and her cousin, but I know that all the while before Ivy's happy eyes were floating memories of Joseph Dalton.

Just then, the whistle of the evening train was heard, and away went the tired feet, twinkling up three flights of stairs to the attic, where, throwing her skirts about her shoulders, Ivy crouched down in the window commanding a view of the turn in the road by which the squire's open carriage must pass on its way home from the station.

Yes, sure enough, there came the vehicle behind the pair of high-stepping bays.

Ivy could distinguish the squire's portly figure, and a slenderer form that Ivy's beating heart told her was Joseph.

But a little half-jealous pang shot through the same heart as she saw that a lady, evidently young, sat beside him, and marked the devoted air with which he leaned towards her, one arm extended behind her on the back of the seat, the other pointing here and there, as though drawing her attention to the different beauties of the landscape.

"Some cousin, I suppose," she said to herself, as she went slowly down the stairs to her own room.

The apron must be removed, the silky braids smoothed with extra care, and the plain linen collar replaced with frills of dainty lace.

Then from its little box, Ivy drew forth a slender chain and locket, the sole ornament she possessed, and settled it among the frills with a satisfied smile.

Tender brown eyes, crimson lips, a low white forehead framed in silken curls—it certainly was a pretty picture that looked back at her from the glass.

In spite of fatigue, Ivy was looking her prettiest, and knew it, and was so glad, for who could tell but what he might come over that very night?

However, she said nothing to her mother of any such expectation.

But as soon as tea was over, with some strip of fancy work, she drew her chair before the fire, and while her swift fingers evolved the mysteries of satin stitch, point, and wheels, her happy thoughts went straying over all that brief, bright month when Joseph Dalton had spent his summer vacation in Redleaf, and every spare moment of it in close vicinity to the Sunderland house.

Joseph, be it known, was the squire's step-son.

Only the year before, the squire had married a dashing, though elderly widow, with two grown-up sons.

One of them Ivy had never seen, but Joseph had been in the habit of paying frequent flying visits from the city, where he resided, and, as report said, was amassing a fortune.

Of course he was an object of eager curiosity to all the Redleaf belles, and on Sunday when he walked slowly up the aisle by his mother's side, and took his place in the squire's great, square pew, many a pair of bright eyes turned to gaze on his tall, graceful figure, brown, curly head, and dark eyes full of lurking *diablerie*.

But when summer came, and he spent a whole month at the squire's, he had singled out Ivy from the whole bevy of rustic beauties, and devoted himself to her with a persistence that soon set every gossip's tongue in motion.

Many were the invidious remarks from the other fair damsels as to the flirting propensities of "these city fellows" which reached Ivy's ears, but too blindly happy to listen or to care, the innocent child "took the gifts the gods provided," and left the future to take care of itself.

And what a thoroughly delightful month it was.

How they had picnicked and frolicked together through the long summer days and strolled through dewy lanes in a dreamy twilight.

And then that last scene of all.

Ivy's cheeks glowed at the remembrance of it.

She had gone down the garden path with him to the little gate, and there, under the shadow of the elms, and hidden from the house by a clump of bushes, they had somehow found saying good-bye a very lingering transaction indeed.

Ivy remembered how he had her hand in his tight grasp till all the warm blood came billowing up over cheek and brow, and her eyes fell beneath his ardent gaze.

Then, almost before she knew it, an arm had stolen around her waist, a pair of warm lips were pressed closely, lingering to her own.

"Good-bye till Christmas," he laughed, and was off before she could chide him.

He hadn't told her in just so many words that he loved her, but how could she doubt it?

Hadn't every look and act declared it over and over during that happy vacation time?

And then if he didn't love her, why that last tender caress, speaking volumes to her answering heart?

Innocent little Ivy!

But while she pondered these things, nine o'clock chimed from the eight-day clock in the corner, and with a little sigh she laid aside her work, and took out the blue silk for its finishing touches.

Of course, she said to herself, she had no right to expect him that evening.

He came home so seldom she was very foolish to think he could come to her the very night of his arrival, when the whole family would be wanting him to themselves.

But he would surely be here to-morrow.

So she stitched away, picturing to herself the wide family room up at the squire's, all the household gathered about the blazing fire, Joseph in the midst of them, the stranger cousin at his side, perhaps.

Again she sighed— she was just beginning to know that she was tired—and folding the completed dress, went wearily to her room, where she was soon tossing in troubled dreams, wherein it seemed that she and Joseph again stood beneath the old elm at the gate, and just as he was stooping to kiss her, the unknown cousin appeared in the guise of a winged evil spirit, and snatching Joseph in her long arms, bore him away through the air, leaving her alone and sobbing with terror.

But at last the morning came, with floods of golden sunlight, and air so crisp and bracing that it made one's blood tingle just to breathe it.

Ivy looked from her window with bounding heart and thrilling pulses.

In the glad light doubt and misgiving fled away as if by enchantment.

Earth was beautiful.

It was a joy even to live.

She made haste to finish her light morning task, and then daintily arrayed herself for church.

She was to walk.

It was only a mile.

With a light step she tripped down the narrow path.

But at the little gate she stopped suddenly, trying to check a frown; for there, under the elm, behind the leafless bushes, stood Alvira Simms, the dressmaker, evidently lying in wait to walk to the church with her, and Miss Simms was one of Ivy's pet aversions.

Many's the time she and Joseph had amused themselves at the expense of those corkscrew curls, and affected ways, and tones of vinegar sourness.

"Good morning," simpered Miss Alvira. "I thought likely you'd be coming, so I walked slow on purpose to see if I couldn't have the pleasure of your company to church. It's a beautiful morning."

"Beautiful," said Ivy, briefly, and she looked curiously at Miss Simms, as if to divine the cause of this sudden desire for her society, for they were usually as distant as the poles.

She fancied an unusually malicious twinkle lurked in the seamstress's snaky black eyes.

"I suppose you've heard the news" with a sharp side glance and an air of immense importance.

"News? No, I've heard no news worth mentioning," returned Ivy, in her most indifferent tones.

"Well, I dont know as you'll consider this worth mentioning," retorted Alvira, bridling up. "It's about Mr. Dalton—Joseph Dalton, you know. But you used to be so very intimate with him that I thought it might interest you to know."

She paused and looked Ivy full in the face.

"He's married!" she said, and there was a hateful, cruel gleam on her mean face as she watched the effect of her words.

"Married!" echoed Ivy, with wide, startled eyes. "I don't believe it," she added, bluntly, in her bewilderment forgetting her politeness.

"Oh, very well," sniffed Miss Alvira, her nose in the air, as she turned to go.

"Excuse me," stammered Ivy, putting out her hand to detain her; "I--I thought you had been misinformed. How did you hear?"

"Oh," said Miss Simms, softening, only too glad to get over the details. "I didn't hear at all—I saw. I was up at the squire's when he brought her home. The room door was open, and I saw them come into the hall together. Then his mother and the squire ran out, and I heard him introduce her as their new daughter. Then, in the middle of the laughing, and kissing and handshaking, someone closed the door to prevent the dressmaker from witnessing their family joys, I suppose."

Poor Ivy.

She turned faint and sick as the fatal truth forced itself upon her, and her face grew white as death. There was a stony look of misery in the soft eye that would have melted a less cruel heart than that of the woman beside her.

But in the midst of her misery, pride came to her aid.

One thing she was resolved upon.

No one should ever suspect her anguish.

No one should ever say she wore the willow for gay Joseph Dalton.

How she accomplished the rest of the distance to church she never knew.

She had a confused remembrance that she turned the subject with some commonplace remarks.

That she discussed the weather, the new minister, with now and then a laugh or careless jest, in much her usual fashion, till they parted at the church door, and Ivy mechanically ascended the gallery stairs, and took her place.

She sat on one side, idly watching the congregation drifting in, one by one, with their shining holiday faces.

By-and-bye came a firm, light tread up the aisle, and Ivy closed her eyes with a sickening shudder.

When she opened them again, Joseph Dalton stood at the head of their pew, ushering in a stately, elegant creature in rustling purple silks, a fluffy, blonde hair above a childish face, and eyes like great soft violets.

He faced the choir for an instant, and as his eyes met Ivy's, the whole face lit up with a gleam.

But the smile faded to a look of half-indignant surprise as Ivy looked straight on and beyond him without the slightest sign of recognition, and he settled himself with that impatient shake of the broad shoulders which Ivy knew so well.

Long after service she lingered in the gallery to avoid all chance of meeting him, and then slowly made her way home, a curious numb feeling at her heart.

But when she reached home, she was even more gay and cordial than usual in her greetings of the numerous aunts, uncles, and young fry of cousins who had assembled there during the morning; and all that afternoon her laugh was the loudest, her jest the wildest among all that hilarious group.

A bright spot burned on either cheek, and there was a feverish light in her eyes; but no one knew that her hands and feet were like ice, that the wild gaiety came from an excitement that just escaped delirium.

And when Julia Hunt and her cousin called, they found her radiant in the blue silk, and ready to discuss "the news," which, thanks to Miss Simms, was at present briskly circulating from one end of Redleaf to the other; praising the bride, too, in such glowing terms that the two girls, watching her narrowly, snatched a moment aside to whisper that there "was nothing in that flirtation of hers with Mr. Dalton, after all—she didn't show a bit jealous."

So through the long twilight they sat in the fire-light, cracking nuts and jokes indiscriminately, and chattering like a convocation of hilarious magpies.

Then, as the young moon looked in at the western windows, Miss Hunt declared, jumping up, they must go; there was to be a dance a mile away, at which they were due in an hour, and a pair of "somebodies" no doubt waiting impatiently at the paternal mansion at this very moment for their return.

So Ivy, throwing her scarlet cloak around her shoulders, and pulling the hood over her curls, ran down to the gate with them to see them off in sociable country fashion; and after a shower of girl-kisses on both sides, stood watching them as they tripped up the road in the weird mingling of twilight and moonlight which hung over the world.

Standing on one side, peering up the road with intent eyes, absorbed in her own thoughts, she did not hear the footsteps that stole softly behind her.

The next moment a strong arm clasped her, a pair of daring lips snatched a kiss.

"Watching for me, Ivy?" cried Joseph Dalton, triumphantly.

"Mr. Dalton! How dare you? Let me go, sir!" exclaimed Ivy, breaking away from him with blazing eyes and face shining white with anger in the faint light.

"Whew!" ejaculated Joseph, stepping back a pace. "It seems to me that you have changed mightily in six short months. Have you forgotten——"

"I have forgotten nothing, sir," burst out Ivy, in tones of suppressed passion. "It is you who have forgotten—forgotten, among other things, the respect which every gentleman owes to a lady."

"Ivy—Miss Sunderland, what is the meaning of this? What has happened that should break off our friendship?"

"What has happened indeed!" echoed Ivy, scornfully. "Mr. Dalton, have you so low an opinion of me, are you such a libertine yourself, as to suppose that to me marriage is no impediment to such liberties as you have just insulted me by taking?"

"Married!" cried Joseph. "So you are married, Ivy. And I to know nothing about it! Why did no one tell me? Oh, Ivy, Ivy! how could——"

"What are you saying, Mr. Dalton! I am not married; it is you—you!"

Here she broke down, her overstrained calmness gave way, and she burst into hysterical sobs.

"Ivy, Ivy!" cried Joseph, "I am not married. Who ever told you so?" and he caught the shuddering, trembling form in his arms, and drew the head down on his bosom. "So that is the meaning of all this, your averted look this morning, and all. I thought afterwards that perhaps you did not see me. Now, who told you such an absurd story? I insist upon knowing."

"Miss—Miss Simms," faltered Ivy, as the sobs died away.

"Alvira! Well, I declare! And you believed her?"

"She—she said that she saw her last night that you introduced her to your mother as her daughter; and then you were at church with her this morning."

"Oh, that meddlesome old maid!" ejaculated Joseph; "to think she should have made you suffer all this, my little clinging vine. Never mind, love, we'll cut her acquaintance when we're married."

"But, Joseph," said Ivy, affecting not to hear the last remark, "Who is the lady? Your cousin? Do you know, I believe I'm half jealous of her?"

"Jealous! well, you won't be so long. That lady is my mother's new daughter, Ivy. She is my brother Dick's lovely little wife, whom my mother had never seen before, and as Dick could not come till the midnight train, and Edith was anxious to get home as soon as possible, I acted as her most dutiful escort."

And Ivy, though she began her holiday rather late in the day, made up in intensity what was lacking in length of time.

Losing a Wife.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

GEORGE JAMISON and Katie Vaughan had a brilliant wedding. Everything was faultless—from the icing on the cake to the arrangement of the bride's waterfall.

Mrs. Vaughan cried just enough not to redden her nose: Mr. Vaughan did the dignified *pater familias* to a charm: and George and Katie, were so affectionate as to give the world the idea that here was a match made in heaven.

The bridal breakfast over, the white moire antique and orange flowers were laid aside and the pretty traveling-suite of gray alpaca with azaline blue trimming, was donned—the sweetest thing, so all the ladies said; the very sweetest love of a thing Madame D'Aubrey had made up for the season. Then there was the bonnet of gray silk to match the dress, with its blue face trimmed to match Katie's eyes, and the golden bird of Paradise drooping its plumage over the crown; and it was such a fine morning, and everything looked propitious, and in the midst of the congratulations and kisses George and Katie started for the depot.

They arrived just in season. The whistle sounded in the distance. George buckled up his traveling shawl, and Katie grasped her parasol.

"George, dearest," said the bride, "do run out and see to the trunks! I should die if, when we get to the Falls, my clothes should not be there! It would be dreadful to have to go dinner in my traveling dress! Do see to them, there's a darling!"

George vanished; the train, puffing and shrieking like shot into the depot. The conductor popped his head into the ladies' room, shouting at the top of his voice:

"All aboard for Danville! all aboard! Come, hurry up, ladies! Five minutes here and time, and another train due."

Katie did not know whether she was bound for Danville or not; probably she was, she said rapidly to herself, and she had better get in and let George follow. So she entered the long, smoky vehicle, looking very much scared, and ready to cry at the slightest provocation. The conductor passed by her seat. She caught his arm.

"Is my husband ——"

"Oh, yes, yes, all right!" said the official, hurrying on in a way railway officials have. "I'll send him right along," and he vanished from view in the long line of moving cars.

Meanwhile George, having seen to the baggage—a proceeding that had occupied more time than he intended it should—returned to the ladies' dressing-room to find Katie missing. He searched about wildly, inquiring of everyone he met, but without success.

"She's probably already in the train, sir," said a ticket-agent of whom he had made inquiries. "You are going to Buffalo, I think you said; that's the train for Buffalo—you'll likely find her there. Just starting—not a minute to lose!"

George grasped the railing of the hind car as it flew by, and flinging open the door, he rushed through car after car, but seeking in vain for Katie. She was not on the train!

"Most likely she got on the wrong train and went by way of Groton," said a conductor. "Groton is a way-station fifteen miles farther ahead. We stop there fifteen or twenty minutes for refreshments. You'll doubtless find her there."

The cars flew over the track. George mentally blest the man who invented steam engines—he could reach Katie so much sooner. Dear little thing! how vexed and troubled she must be—and George grew quite lachrymose over her desolate condition.

But it seemed ages to George before they whirled up to the platform at Groton, and then he did not wait to practise any courtesy. He leaped out impetuously, knocking over an old lady with a flower-pot and a bird-cage in her hand, demolishing the pot, and putting the bird into hysterics. The old lady was indignant, and hit George a rap with her umbrella that spoiled forever the fair proportions of his bridal beaver; but he was too much engaged in thought of his lost bride to spare a regret for his hat.

He flew through the astonished crowd, smashing up a crinoline here and knocking down a small boy there, until he reached the clerk of the station. Yes, the clerk believed there was one lady came alone; she had gone to the Belvidere Hotel — she must be the one.

George waited to hear no more. He hurried up the street to the place, the landlord assured him that no lady of Katie's style had arrived: perhaps she had stopped at Margate, ten miles back. George seized on the hope. There was no train to Margate until the next morning, but the wretched husband could not wait all night—he could walk.

He got directions about the roads: was told that it was a straight one—for the most of the way, woods — rather lonesome, but pleasant. He set forward at once, not stopping to swallow a mouthful. Excitement had taken away his appetite. The fine day developed into a cloudy evening—the night would be darker than usual!

George hastened on, too much excited to feel fatigue—too much agonized about Katie to notice that he had split his elegant French gaiters out at the sides.

After three or four hours hard walking he began to think that something must be wrong. He ought to be approaching the suburbs of Margate. In fact, he ought to have reached the village itself some time before. He grew a little doubtful about his being on the right road, and began to look about him. There was no road at all or rather it was all road; for all vestige of fences and wheel-tracks had vanished—there was forest, forest everywhere.

The character of the ground beneath his feet changed at every step he took. It grew softer and softer, until he sank ankle deep in mud; and suddenly, before he could turn about, he felt in almost to his arm-pits. He had stumbled into a quagmire! A swift horror came over him! People had died before in places like this—and it would be so dreadful to die thus, and Katie never know what had become of him. He struggled with the strength of desperation to free himself, but he might as well have taken it coolly. He was held fast.

Thus slowly the hours wore away. The night was ages long. The sun had never taken so much time to rise in, but probably it realized that nothing could be done until it was up and it was not disposed to hurry.

As soon as it was fairly light, George began to scream at the top of his voice, in the hope that someone who might be going somewhere might hear him. He amused himself in this way for an hour, and at the end of that time you could not have distinguished it from that of a frog close at hand, who had been doing his best to rival our hero.

At last, just as George was beginning to despair, he heard a voice in the distance [illegible]

"Hallo there! Is it you or a frog?"

"I—s-o-o," said George, "and I shall be dead in ten minutes! Come quick! I am into the mud up to my eyes!"

Directly an old woman appeared, a sunbonnet on her head and a basket on her arm. She was huckleberrying.

"Land's sake!" cried she. "You're in for it, hain't ye?"

"Yes; too deep for comfort?"

"Sarved ye right! I'm glad of it! Didn't ye see the notice the old man put up that nobody mustn't come a huckleberrying in this 'ere swamp?"

"Huckleberrying!" exclaimed George, angrily. "You must think a fellow was beside himself if he came into this jungle if he knew it! Huckleberrying indeed! I'm after my wife!"

"Land sake! Your wife! Well of all things! I declare, I never!"

"She got on the wrong train, and so did I, and I expect she's at Margate, and I started from Groton last night to walk there, and lost my way. Help me out, do, that's a dear old woman!"

The old woman steadied herself against a tree, and, being a woman of muscle, she soon drew George out—mud from head to foot. He shook himself.

"There if you'll show me the way I'll go right on——"

"No, you won't, neither! You'll go right over to our house and have a cup of coffee and something to eat, and a suit of the old man's clothes to put on while I dry yourn. And I'll send Tom over to Margate with the horse and wagon to fetch your wife."

"You're a trump!" cried George, wringing her hand. "God bless you! You shall be well rewarded for your kindness."

Mrs. Stark's house was only a little way distant, and to its shelter she took George. Tom was dispatched to Margate to hunt up Mrs. Jameson, and George arrayed in a suit of Mr. Stark's clothes—blue swallow-tailed coat, home-made gray pantaloons, cow-hide boots, and white hat with broad brim—for the Starks were Friends—felt like a new man.

They gave him a good breakfast, which did not cause an ache; and while Tom was absent the old lady made him lie down and take a nap.

Tom returned about noon. He had scoured the whole village, but found nothing. Only one passenger had left the train at Margate on the previous day, and that was an old man with patent plasters for sale.

Poor George was frenzied. He rushed out of the house and stood looking first up and then down the road, uncertain which way to wend his course. Suddenly the train for Groton swept past, and a white handkerchief was swinging from an open window, and above that he caught the gleam of golden hair and blue ribbons! It was Katie beyond a doubt. He cleared the fence at a bound, and rushed after the flying train. He ran till he was ready to drop, when he came upon some men with a hand-car who were repairing the road. He gave them ten dollars to take him to Groton. He was sure he should find Katie there!

But no! the train had not stopped at all—this was the express for Buffalo! But a bystander informed him that a lady, answering the description he gave of Katie, had been seen the day before at Danville, crying, and saying she had lost her husband!

George darted off. He caught with avidity at the hope thus held out. It must be Katie! Who else had lost their husband.

A train was just leaving for Danville. He sprang on board and suffered an eternity during the transit, for it was an accommodation train, and everybody knows about those horrible delays at every station.

But they reached Danville at last. George inquired for the lady who had lost her husband. Yes, he was all right—she had gone to the American House to wait for him. She expected him by every train until he came, said the ticket master.

He hurried with all speed to the American.

Yes, she was there, said the clerk. She was waiting for her husband. Room 221, right hand, second flight.

George flew up stairs, burst open the door of 221, and entered without ceremony. She was sitting by the window looking for him, with her back to the door. He sprang forward, and holding her in his arms, rained kisses upon her face.

"My Katie! my darling! my darling! have I found you at last?"

She turned her face and looked at him before she spoke, and then she set up such a scream as made the very hair rise on George's head.

"You are not my James!" she cried. "Oh heaven! help! help! Somebody come quick! I shall be robbed and murdered! help! help! Murder! thieves!"

George stood aghast. The lady was middle aged, with false teeth, and a decidedly snuffy-looking nose. No more like his charming little Katie than she was like the Venus de Medici!

He turned to flee just as the stairway was alive with people alarmed by the cries of the woman. They tried to stop him but he was not to be stayed. He took the stairs at a leap, and landed somewhere near the bottom, among the wreck of three chamber-maids, and as many white-aproned waiters.

And before any one could seize him he was rushing down over the front steps. A lady and gentleman were slowly ascending them, and George in his mad haste, ran against the lady and broke in the brim of her bonnet!

"You rascal!" cried the gentleman with her, "what do you mean by treating the lady in this manner?" and he seized our hero by the collar.

Then, for the first time, George looked at the couple before him.

"It is Katie! Oh, Katie!" cried he—for this time there was no mistake: it was Katie and her Uncle Charles. "Oh, my wife! my wife!"

He tried to take her in his arms, but she fled from him in terror.

"Take that dreadful man away!" she cried, "I am sure he is insane, or drunk! Only see his boots and his awful hat!"

"I tell you I am your own George!" exclaimed he. "Oh, Katie, where have you been?"

Katie looked at him now, and, recognizing him, began to cry.

"Oh, dear! that ever I should have lived to have seen this day! My George, that I thought so pure and good, faithless and intoxicated! Oh, Uncle Charles! what will become of me?"

"My dear neice, be patient," said her uncle. "I think this is George, and we will hear what he has to say before condemning him. Mr. Jameson, I met your wife in the cars yesterday, and she informed me that you had deserted her at the Windham depot. Of course, I could not believe that your absence was intentional, and I persuaded her to remain here while I telegraphed to the principal stations along the road for information of you. Why did I receive no answer?"

"Because the telegraph does not run into old Mrs. Stark's huckleberry swamp, where I had the honor of spending last night," said George, losing his temper.

"But this extraordinary disguise——"

"My clothes were muddy, and I have got on Mr. Stark's," said George; and, though the explanation was not particularly lucid to those who heard it, they were satisfied.

"My dearest George!" cried Katie, rushing into his arms; "so you did not desert me, and I shan't have to be divorced?"

"Never, my darling! and we'll never be separated again for a moment."

"No, not for all the baggage in the world! Oh, George! you don't know how I have suffered!"

The crowd could be kept ignorant no longer, for scores had assembled around the hotel, drawn thither by the disturbance. Matters were explained, and cheers long and loud rent the air.

The landlord got up an impromptu wedding-dinner, at which Katie presided; and George, looking very sheepish in Mr. Stark's swallow-tail, did the honors.

They proceeded on their tour the next day, and soon afterward Mr. and Mrs. Stark were delighted to receive a box by express, containing the last suit of the old gentleman, and the wherewithal to purchase him another, besides the handsomest drawn-silk bonnet for Mrs. Stark that the old lady had ever seen.

"There, old man," said she, turning from the glass at which she had been surveying herself in the new bonnet, "I allers told ye that huckleberry swamp would turn to something, if it was only to raise frogs in! Guess I hit things sometimes!"

NOTES ON NATURAL HISTORY.—Throughout the animal creation, the adaptation of the color of the creature to its haunts is worthy of admiration, as tending to its preservation. The colors of insects, and of a multitude of the lower animals, contribute to their concealments. Caterpillars which feed on leaves are generally either green, or have a large proportion of that hue in the color of their coats. As long as they remain still, how difficult it is to distinguish a grasshopper or young locust from the herbage or leaf on which it rests. The butterflies that flit around among flowers are colored like them. The small birds which frequent hedges have backs of a greenish or brownish-green hue, and their bellies are generally whitish, or light-colored, so as to harmonize with the sky. Thus they become less visible to the hawk or cat that passes above or below them. The way-farer across the fields almost treads upon the sky-lark before he sees it rise warbling to heaven's gate. The goldfinch passes much of its time among flowers, and is vividly colored accordingly. The partridge can hardly be distinguished from the fallow or stubble among which it crouches, and it is an accomplishment among sportsmen to have a good eye for finding a hare sitting. In northern countries the winter dress of the hares and ptarmigans is white, to prevent detection among the snows of those inclement regions.

If we turn to the waters, the same design is evident. Frogs even vary their color according to that of the mud or sand that forms the bottom of the ponds or streams which they frequent; nay, the tree-frog takes its specific name from the color which renders it so difficult to see it among the leaves, where it adheres by the cupping-glass-like processes at the end of its toes. It is the same with fish, especially those which inhabit the deep waters. It is quite difficult to detect the pike, with its dark green and mottled back and sides, from the sandy and weedy among which that fresh water shark lies in the water, as motionless as they. Even when a fearing old trout is six or seven pounder, sails, in his wantonness, leisurely upstream, with his back fin partly above the surface, on the lookout for flies, etc., except in very [illegible] he is [illegible] that ripples the whispering water. But the belly of these are white, or nearly so; thus imitating in a degree the color of the sky, to deceive the otter, which generally takes its prey from below, swimming under the intended victim. Nor is this design less manifest in the color and appearance of some of the largest terrestrial animals; for the same principle seems to be kept in view, whether regard be had to the smallest insects, or the quadruped giants of the land.

HOP vines, usually a waste product in this country, are said to have proved not only a good stock for fine paper, but the best substitute yet obtained for rags, in French paper mills.

Our Young Folks.

A RACE FOR A CAT.

BY JULIA A. GODDARD.

"TOO small! too small!" so the birds sang, so the roses whispered, so the bees hummed.

"She will creep in at the window," said the mother, who was kneeling beside a little child. "Only a small child can do that."

But the window shut down suddenly with a bang, and the house to which it belonged began to move away, slowly at first, then quicker and quicker, until it was out of sight altogether. The child began to sob, and said—

"Nan will run after it."

Ah! such a flutter among the roses, and such a twittering amongst the birds, whilst the bees hummed—

"Too small, too small!
She should be tall,
If she would catch the house at all."

And the birds sang—

"She must grow,
We all do know:
And that's a process very slow."

"It will be years," said the mother, "before she grows tall."

"Pooh! porridge" said a toy dog that was lying on the ground.

The mother turned round.

The little dog was standing upright, and had pricked up his ears.

"Porridge, porridge!" he said, and he kept on saying it over so many times that at last the mother thought there must be something in it.

* * * * * * *

So the mother made some porridge, and Nan began to eat it.

On the first plateful she could look over the table; at the second she reached up to her mother's shoulders; at the third she was taller than her mother.

"Stop! stop!" said the mother, as Nan began on the fourth plate; "you'll be a giantess; and your legs are so thin, I am afraid they will break in two. You look as if you were on stilts."

"One must have long legs," said Nan, "in order to run fast. It was the woolly dog that thought of it," she added, and she would have stooped down to pat the toy dog, with its red morocco collar, but she was so high up that she found it a difficult matter to bend down. "I am as stiff as a poker," said she.

The woolly dog, however, understood what she wanted, and he jumped upon a chair, then upon the table, and finally into Nan's arms.

She would have given him some porridge, but her mother said—

"No; if he should grow as tall as you, we should not know what to do with him."

Then the little dog laughed.

"Perhaps he will run away with the spoon," said Nan.

But no; he was an honest little dog, and did not think of doing anything of the kind.

* * * * *

On the opposite side of the house was an old gentleman in a velvet cap. He had a paper in his hand, and was trying to teach something to a boy who was on the other side of the trellis. But the boy was not attending to him, though he kept his eyes fixed upon the paper.

No; he was muttering—

"The little cat was in the house, and the house moved away. It must have been an enchanted house and an enchanted cat."

"What are you saying?" asked the old gentleman. "That is not on the paper."

Then the boy looked up and said—

"If I had seven-leagued boots, I'd go after them."

"That is certainly not written down there," answered the old gentleman. "Of what are you thinking, Ulick?"

"Of the house that stood close by this house. I had a dream last night that it moved away, and that the little cat with which I played had also gone, and I want to go after them."

"You talk nonsense, Ulick. How can a house made of bricks and mortar and heavy beams of wood move away?"

"That I know not; but it is gone. I hear it now rumbling away in the distance, as if it were on great wheels—I do really," answered Ulick.

The old gentleman, who often came to chat with Ulick, and to try to teach him various things, felt quite vexed, and he folded up his paper, and shut up his camp-stool and went away.

When he had gone an old hen turned round and spoke to Ulick.

"You can hear us, for you have the right sort of ears, but the old man cannot. It is quite true: the house has gone."

"Where?"

The rabbits were listening, with their long ears erect.

"That I cannot tell, but Nan is going after it."

"Nan! but she is so small."

"Is she?" exclaimed the hen. "You should see her now that she has eaten the porridge: she is much taller than her mother, and her legs are so long that she can skim over the ground like an ostrich."

"Then she will get the cat."

"Perhaps. One does not know," answered the hen.

"I hope she will," said a young rabbit.

"I hope she won't," said an old rabbit. "for then she will bring her back here."

There was a groan amongst the rabbits and the poultry. And then the Virginia creeper, that was twisting and turning and throwing its leaves about all over the trellis, began to quiver and shake as if it were trying to say something, and at last a very tiny voice came from one of the shoots, and said—

Should Nan the flying house o'ertake
She will with it long journeys make,
And come back here no more.

The fowls and rabbits were glad to hear this, but Ulick said—

"Nan shall not overtake the house; Nan shall not have the dear little cat."

"Nan will soon be tired," said Ulick; "besides she does not know where to go."

"Do you?"

Ulick started, for he could see no one. Still he was not surprised, for since the rabbits and fowls and Virginia creeper had begun to talk there was no reason why other things should not also. It must have been some sensible creature; and he began to consider the point.

No, he did not know where the house had gone; he did not suppose that even the top of the tallest chimney would be visible or even the smoke from it. The house might have gone along the straight road, or have turned to the right or left, he could not tell. And Ulick sat down upon a large moss-covered stone, and felt very despondent.

"What's the matter, little man?" asked his big brother Ben, who happened to come up at the moment. And Ulick told him of his difficulty.

"Oh! if that is all," said big Ben, "I will start you on your journey, for I know which way the house went. I saw it rumbling along the road, and then it turned off to the right and kept a straight line over the country; nothing stopped it, hedges, ditches, or anything else."

And he took Ulick's hand, and went out upon the road with him. Ulick half turned and kissed his hand to his own home.

"What is that for?" asked Ben.

"For 'good bye,' if I don't come back again. The house might take away altogether, you know."

Ben laughed.

"Well then, boy, start off, for there in the distance over the corn-fields you can just see the house. There, there—do you see it—moving along?"

"No—yes—no—yes, yes I do. But what is that?"

"What is that? why a pole with a flag on top," said Ben.

"No, no," said Ulick, "that——"

"Why! it's Nan flying along. What long legs she has! She goes so fast that she seems as if she were in two places at once."

"There are two girls running," said Ulick, "and one seems to be overtaking the other all the time."

"No, there is but one," answered Ben, "but she is here and there so quickly that you seem to see her in two places at once—you understand what I mean. And it looks exactly like two people."

"I don't know," said Ulick; "I am sure there are two Nans. What long legs!"

"Yes, porridge has done that. You'll never overtake her."

But Ulick started off. Ben watched him out of sight and then went home.

* * * * * *

Now all this time a cat was lying comfortably in the house that was running away.

The chair was covered with red velvet, and there was a bright fire in the room, that sparkled and glowed and made all the furniture in it shine.

The cat looked up and then she purred, saying—

"Till there is a place
Where gamekeepers are not,
My house shall not stay
In any spot."

And the house with the cat in it went on and on, until it came to a far-off place where there were no houses and no gamekeepers, and no fear of traps. Then it stopped with such a jerk that the front door flew open, and a woolly dog, with a red morocco collar and very stiff legs, came in, crying out—

"She is coming, she is coming,
She will like a cup of tea,
She must be quite hot with running,
She is coming after me."

"Who is *she*?" asked the cat.

Then said the dog—

"Little Nan, she ate the porridge,
And she grew quite tall,
But when she has reached your cottage
She will be quite small."

"Why?" asked the cat.

"Because the effects of the porridge only lasts whilst she is running."

"Oh!" responded the cat.

Upon which Nan herself came running in, and she was no larger than when her mother was kneeling beside her in the garden.

"O my dear, dearest, darling, little pussy-cat! I have found you again, and we will live together always, and you will let me play with you. I am so glad to see you again."

The cat purred and rubbed her head against Nan, as much as to say "Yes."

And the woolly dog barked for joy.

So Nan had won the race.

Nan looked out of the window and nodded to Ulick, who was panting in the distance. She also held up the cat for him to see.

There was no longer any need for Ulick to run, for everything round him was shouting—

"Nan has won the race!"

Yes, he knew that she had, and he wept bitterly and went home again. Perhaps if he had also eaten the porridge he might have outstripped Nan.

No one ever saw the house again, though once it returned to the spot upon which it had stood near Ulick's home. It did not stay long there, only just long enough for Nan's mother to pack up her clothes and join her little girl, who was too small to live by herself.

Then the front door shut quite tightly, and the house fled away faster than ever, and never stopped until it had reached a beautiful island far, far away in the middle of the sea. There it paused, for no gamekeepers, or traps, or cruel boys were to be found there. And in the house on the beautiful island Nan and her mother, and the cat, and the toy dog lived peacefully and happily for ever and ever.

ETHEL'S PINK PLANT.

BY PIPKIN.

ETHEL was always trying to write poetry, but it was so hard to find rhymes. When the cat killed the big pink begonia, she did manage to find a rhyme; and she thought the epitaph looked beautiful printed in violet ink on a piece of paper—

"Here my poor begonia lies,
Drop a tear and wipe your eyes."

These are the only verses Ethel ever made. Perhaps we are beginning near the end of the story. You may want to know what the big pink begonia was, and how the cat killed it.

The beginning of this sad story was a red ribbon bow with a kitten behind it; the bow was so big and the cat was so little that the ribbon looked much more important than the kitten that wore it. Ethel called the kitten Kafoozalum; Tom talked of the bow with the cat behind it; to which Ethel retorted: "The ribbon becomes her very much, Tom. Boys have no taste."

Early in the summer—about the time that the kitten was a weak little squeaker in a basket of straw with the cat of the house next door—Ethel was given a plant as a present. There had never before been a begonia in her mother's green-house; and Ethel knew very little about it, except that any rough treatment would kill it. The begonia grew very fast. It became a tall plant, with beautiful large reddish-veined leaves, and it was covered with a cloud of pink blossoms.

One day Ethel ran out of the conservatory in a hurry and left the door open; and Kafoozalum—the red bow with the kitten behind it—ran into the conservatory in a hurry, as she had never had the chance before. Tom, coming home from school, went, watering-pot in hand, to attend to his geranium-slips; he found the door open, and the kitten turned nearly on its head in frantic attempts to roll in the begonia pot.

A few weeks after, all the pink bloom was gone. The begonia, branch and leaf, died away. There was nothing left but a dry brown stump.

"It is dead!" cried Ethel. "A knock or a rub kills the young shoots. Mrs. Smith told me so. Kafoozalum rubbed and knocked it enough to kill it all."

"Tears! tears for the begonia!" laughed Tom. "Why, Ethel, I thought nothing but the death of Kafoozalum would reduce you to tears."

"Ah! Tom, but you don't know how fond I was of that plant. It was the only one I ever had. I feel almost as if it was *really alive* once, and dead now! I shall make it a grave and bury it."

Tom seemed very much amused at this idea—because the begonia was buried already in its own pot—and Ethel could not bear his making fun about it. So she ran away to her mother's room, with tears in her eyes.

"Mother, how do you spell 'begonia'?"

"Why, dear? who are you writing to?"

"My poor begonia is quite dead," sobbed Ethel, with a gulp of grief. "I want to write its epitaph."

"You mustn't cry about it now, Ethel, dear. It could not feel. I shall get you another next summer."

But the only consolation Ethel could get was the writing of the epitaph. She worked at this for half an hour, and smeared herself very much with violet ink.

"Here is laid my pink begonia," was her first attempt.

Tom came into the room to learn his lessons at the other side of the table.

"Tom," she said, "please don't say your verbs out loud. I can't write poetry when you do. Tell me a rhyme for begonia. 'Here is laid my pink begonia.'"

"'Toss it over the wall, or let it alone-will-you?' That is the only rhyme in the English language," said Tom.

"You are very unkind," said Ethel, leaning her cheek on an inky hand, and rubbing her hair till it was a wild black mane. Then she tried what would happen if she began in quite a different way. At last she read out in sad tones:—

"Here my poor begonia lies,
Drop a tear and wipe your eyes."

To which Tom only answered in a jaunty tone, throwing his penknife out of his pocket.

"Here's my knife to bury your roots,
Lock the greenhouse and wipe your boots."

Ethel's mouth gave a little twitch; but she would not laugh when Tom made fun of her poetry.

She went into the greenhouse carrying a piece of black stuff and a pair of scissors, the penknife, and her verses printed in violet.

Then she dug a hole in the earthen floor, under the greenhouse shelf, in a warm corner near the pipes. Next she dug her begonia root out of the pot, popped it into the hole, covered it up, and left a bit of stick standing upright, holding in a notch the wonderful epitaph.

Tom found her there, drying and smearing her face with an earthy corner of her pinafore. Tom had Kafoozalum peeping out from under his jacket front; but Ethel sobbed afresh at sight of the red bow and the kitten behind it.

"Come and take care of my geraniums with me, Ethel," said Tom.

"Oh! boo-hoo-no-no! You are very unkind."

"Why, what have I done? *I* didn't roll on my head in the begonia pot, did I, pussy?"

"Oh! boo-hoo—go 'way!"

So Tom went away. But the next time Ethel went into the greenhouse with a bright face, she could not help laughing at Tom's addition to her verses. She read:—

"Here my poor begonia lies,
Drop a tear and wipe your eyes—
The door was open—if you had locked it,
The bow with the kitten couldn't have knocked it."

The winter passed; and Ethel's birthday came in the spring.

"Here is a silver pencil for you to write poetry with," said Tom, mischievously. Poetry or not the silver pencil was worth having, and Ethel felt that teasing Tom was fond of her. Ah! what could she do without Tom, or without the teasing either? "Come into the greenhouse," he said; "there's a begonia for you."

"Is there? I thought I had all my presents."

She went racing to the greenhouse, and came back with a disappointed face. "Why do you cheat me, Tom? This is not the first of April."

"Come and see." He led her into the greenhouse to the pink begonia's grave.

They both stooped down to the corner of the earthen floor near the hot pipes.

There was a dark red folded leaf growing above the earth.

"Oh, Tom! it is my own dear old plant."

"Yes—it is growing up again for another summer," he said. I found it a week ago; but I kept it for a birthday surprise."

"Tom," said Ethel, seizing his arm in her delight, "put my poetry in your pocket, and let us go and ask mother if we should put it in a pot."

"What? put the poetry in a pot? Whatever for?"

"Oh! no, I didn't mean that at all—I mean——"

"Never mind—here go the verses, though they've served their turn."

So the pink plant went into a pot again, and grew more beautiful than ever; and the only poetry Ethel ever made went into Tom's pocket.

SHOPKEEPERS' PRICE-MARKS.—The system of marking prices on goods in general use among retailers is for each to adopt a word or term which shall contain ten unrepeated letters to correspond with the numerals. Thus, for instance, the word:

A n c h o r i t e s
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The cost of an article has been usually marked on it, the salesman knowing what to add; but this plan is losing in popularity and is being replaced by the better method of marking the selling price. Employing the key word "Anchorites," an article marked, say "a. i. o.," would indicate $1.75. Some merchants have both cost and selling rates marked, in which case the two are separated by a line, the cost on top and the selling price under.

Humorously inclined individuals not infrequently get up a key word or term which would make customers smile were they aware of the contrast between the mysterious cost marks and that from which they are derived. No little ingenuity is displayed in the selection, but after the essential or ten unrepeated letters there is nothing wanting but so simple orthography that the foot of the spellers in the salesman class have no inducement whatever to go wrong. The tit-tat-toe cost mark is the only known which does not employ the alphabet. It may be understood by drawing the ordinary tit-tat-toe game diagram and marking the figure beginning at the upper left hand space, thence to the right, and repeat until the nine spaces are filled.

In this device x is substituted for the "nought." To express $1.50 by the tit-tat-toe, the hieroglyphic would be an L with the horizontal part run directly opposite from normal; a square; and an L set wrong side up, a good deal like the small boy's sketch in his school books under which he places the caution, "Don't steel this book in earnest fraud for fear the gallus will be your end." It will be observed that these characters represent the parts of the tit-tat-toe diagram in which the numerals 1, 5, and 9 occur.

WERE men to presume, says an old writer, so far as to invent a test by which divine origin of a religion should be tried, I can imagine none more unexceptionable than its tendency to overcome what is acknowledged to be evil in human nature, and to raise in an immeasurable degree the standard of happiness.

PLEASURE.

BY H. H.

Some pleasures come like rainbows,
  At the ending of a storm;
Some vanish like the wind that blows,
  To take no lasting form;
Some pleasures come by accident,
  And turn our pain to cheer,
When messengers by Heaven sent
  Bring help in danger near.

Some crosses come and cause us strife,
  And Fortune's loss a while;
They come as if to shade our life,
  Then light it with a smile;
We fear the sinking of the ship,
  And dread the rider's fall,
But One who takes no seeming note
  Knows what is best for all.

Look from life's first day to its last,
  And balance good with ill;
How much, how very much, has passed
  To make us love it still;
How sweet have been the flowers seen,
  How dear each loving heart
With hopes and crosses in between,
  How brave lives dread to part.

With life's large compass in His hand,
  One guides our varying way,
Who sees some suffer and grow grand,
  As is His will each day;
Who sends us pains and crosses
  To bring us joy by stealth,
And bids us prize our losses
  As the golden key of wealth.

PYGMIES AND GIANTS.

HOW many of our young readers who have seen elephants in the menagerie are aware how these giant animals are caught by pygmy man. They run wild in the forests of India, Ceylon, and other countries of Asia; and once in a while the rulers of those countries determine to have an elephant hunt.

They begin by inclosing an acre or two of ground in the forest, and generally on the bank of a river; they put a fence of logs all around it so strong that the elephant cannot break it down, but with a great many holes where men can pass through with ease. There is a gate at each end, which can be closed or opened instantly; from the entrance gate two fences run out in the shape of the letter "V," and each fence is from five to ten miles long. For a mile or more the fences are as strong as the sides of the yard, but beyond it they are very slight. At the end of the yard, opposite the entrance, there is a pen which will hold three elephants standing side by side, and there is a gate at the end of the pen where the animals can be let out when desired.

When all is ready, hunters are sent into the forest to drive in the herds. Elephants are very shy and will flee from the presence of men; the hunters endeavor to get on the side of the herd farthest from the yard before they are discovered. Then the animals move in the desired direction, and the great effort of the hunters is to have them go gently forward until they are within the line of the fences, or in the jaws of the letter "V." Elephants are afraid of traps, and when they come to a fence, no matter how small it may be, they do not try to cross it. In this way they are kept moving towards the yard, but the hunters do not show themselves or make any noise until the animals are inside the strong part of the fences. As soon as this is accomplished there is a great tumult. Fires are lighted, guns are fired, horns are blown, and the frightened herd dashes forward and enters the yard. Then the gate is closed and the great beasts are fairly trapped.

They run around the yard and try to escape. In the pen at the end opposite the entrance, two tame elephants are standing, and there is just room for one of the wild ones to squeeze in between them. He goes in and the gate is closed; then the two tame elephants hold him firmly with their trunks while men slip through holes in the fence and bind the feet of the captive with strong ropes. When he is well secured the pen is opened and the tame elephants drag him to the bank of the river, where he is turned on his side and left in the care of a keeper. Then they go back again to the pen and assist in binding and dragging off another prisoner. In this way the hunters secure as many as are required, and the rest are let out to return to the forest.

The captured elephants are kept lying on their sides without food or water until they are completely conquered. They are literally subdued by hunger and thirst, as they receive nothing until they throw up their trunks and make a peculiar sound, which indicates that they will obey their keepers. Then the ropes are removed from their feet, they are fed and allowed to drink as much water as they like, and are driven off to the stables and put to work as readily as though they had been in captivity all their lives. They are perfectly docile, and do not show any desire to return to their wild life in the forest; and another curious thing is that they are ready to assist in capturing others in the way they themselves were taken. Very often the elephants that are used for securing the wild ones in the pens, holding them while the men are tying their feet and dragging them out afterwards, are those which have been prisoners only one or two years.

The captured elephants groan and show great distress while they are being secured; they twine their trunks round each other, and frequently the tears run down their cheeks, and they seem to be crying like children. The tame ones do not manifest the least sympathy with them, but, on the contrary, appear to take pleasure in their sufferings.

It requires from five to eight days to starve an elephant into submission, the time depending upon the condition of the weather. During all this time the keeper stays close by his side, watching him through the day, sleeping between his feet at night, and thus making the animal accustomed to his presence.

When the elephant gives the sign of submission, the keeper hurries to loosen and feed him, so that the poor beast is sure to recognize him as a friend. It is owing to this fact that the elephant is so fond of his keeper, and will obey him in preference to any one else. After a time he may develop bad qualities and become absolutely dangerous, but for a few weeks after his capture he is very obedient.

Grains of Gold.

Be fearful only of thyself.

Nature is commanded by obeying her.

It is much safer to obey than to govern.

The world is undone by looking at things at a distance.

Without steady, hard work it is impossible to excel in anything.

It is difficult to persuade mankind that the love of virtue is the love of themselves.

It is a shameful thing to be weary of inquiry when what we search for is excellent.

Where men are the most sure and arrogant, they are commonly the most mistaken.

Seem as you are. When you are simply comfortable, don't pretend to be tremendously happy.

To an honest mind, the best perquisites of a place are the advantages it gives a man of doing good.

Never are human beings smaller than when they want to plague and punish without knowing how.

Manly spirit, as it is generally called, is often little else than the froth and foam of hard-mouthed insolence.

Nothing can be more foolish than an idea which some parents have that it is not respectable to set their children to work.

Kind words prevent a good deal of that perverseness which rough and imperious usage often produces in generous minds.

The faults of the world can only be learned by a long acquaintance with it, and by suffering from that acquaintance.

Some minds magnify little objects, and bel the great ones, as the telescope makes the planets larger and the fixed stars smaller.

Be brave, be noble, be true, and you will pass through the coming years as through a white colonnade of monumental pillars.

A sensible observance of hygienic laws is frequently the one thing needful to transform a doleful man into a bright and cheerful one.

Dashing young manhood is generally a sort of eagle whose wing-feathers are as much too long as the steering tail-feathers are too short.

Time's moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on; nor all your piety and wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

Be not vacillating in your purposes; let not every bright meteor that shoots across your path attract you to new aims. This would be to make your life but as whirling sands borne about by every fickle wind.

Nothing so cements and holds together in union all the parts of a society as faith or credit, which can never be kept up, unless men are under some force or necessity of honestly paying what they owe one another.

There are fellows who always have an ill-conditioned "fast" or two, which they lead after them into decent company like so many bull-dogs, ready to let them slip at every ingenious suggestion or pleasant fancy.

"If a civil word or two will render a man happy," said a French king, "he must be a wretch indeed who will not give them to him. Such a disposition is like lighting another man's candle by one's own, which loses none of its brilliancy by what the other gains.

Femininities.

Modesty is sometimes exalted pride.

A good wife is a fortune to a man, especially if she is poor.

Woman was made after man, but the men have been after the women ever since.

The Empress of Austria, visiting Heidelberg, is attended by a suite of sixty persons.

For morning wear, especially with flannel goods, colored cuffs and collars are again coming into favor.

Mrs. E. V. D. Miller, a Mississippi lady, has accepted the position of private secretary to Secretary Lamar.

The memoirs of the Empress Eugenie in book form, under her personal supervision, are about ready for publication.

"Yes, dear, you see mamma don't think it's right for me to read French novels in Lent, so I only read translations."

Fashion's latest freak in Paris is a fancy ball in which each lady is dressed as a flower—roses, lilies, violets, bluebells, and marigolds.

Boston girls have organized a mutual aid matrimonial society. Whenever one member marries, the others are assessed to set her up in housekeeping.

A female rights woman, or a woman rights female, as you prefer, sent some manuscript to a newspaper office, and desired that it be called womanuscript.

A few days ago a woman of Sandy Creek, N. Y., having built a fire, raised the lids of the stove to see how it was progressing, when her teeth fell into the fire and were consumed.

For out-door wear the edicts of fashion are opposed to the display of jewelry, a few simple ornaments only being in style. Even earrings are said to be becoming unfashionable for street wear.

A Sansom street woman thought she had struck the concentrated essence of spitefulness when she told her neighbor, "If you didn't wear a wig I'd like to pull your hair for you, you nasty thing."

A woman's friendship borders more closely on love than a man's. Men affect each other in the reflection of noble or friendly acts, while women ask fewer proofs, and more signs and expressions of attachment.

The first application of a woman to be admitted to the bar of Oregon was made recently by a female from Washington Territory, where she passed a good examination and was admitted. The Supreme Court held that the statute will not allow the admission of a female lawyer.

One of the cases reported at a recent meeting of the Charity Organization Society of Washington was that of a professional beggar who has two dresses—a begging dress and a society dress. Her name appeared in the society columns of a city paper as receiving guests during the inauguration, and she was found to be living handsomely out of alms.

Mrs. Mary Kyle Dallas claims that Sophia Peabody has done more than any other woman to forward American literature, in that she married Nathaniel Hawthorne and took care of him, with the result of "The Scarlet Letter" and "The Marble Faun." Anna Dickinson declares in favor of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Do be contented; "martyrs" are detestable: a cheerful, happy spirit is infectious; you can carry it about with you like a sunny atmosphere; do avoid whimpering, it is as bad as giggling; both are to be condemned; there is no excuse for either one of them; if you have anything to say, say it; if you have not, hold your tongue altogether; silence is golden.

One night recently a lady and gentleman, aged respectively fifty and sixty years, were snowbound on a railway train at Williamston, Mich. In their tribulations they were attracted toward each other, and though they had been acquainted but a few hours, the old man proposed matrimony, the lady accepted, and they were married by a rector who happened to be on the train.

"Henrietta, dear?" "Yes, ma," from her daughter at the door, parting from her sweetheart, who is just kissing her good-night. "Tell George to look out for the paint," George does not kiss her again, and Henrietta thinks it is real mean of her mother to give her away, until she remembers that perhaps as the front gate has just been newly painted, she may have referred to it.

"Will you pull the bell?" she asked of a man across the aisle as the car reached the corner. "No, madam," he answered, with a bow, "but I will be most happy to pull the strap which rings the bell." "Ah! but never mind. The strap is connected with two bells, and you might stop the wrong end of the car!" And the look she turned upon him was full of triumph veneered with cayenne pepper.

"Oh, dear?" sighed a woman, who was always complaining about her health, and who was never, under any circumstances, without some serious ailment. "I feel so wretched this morning. I think I am the most unfortunate woman alive." "Yes," said her husband sympathizingly, "I feel sorry for you, indeed, my dear. I don't believe there is a woman in the world that enjoys such poor health as you do."

A gentleman in Albany who broke a rule of the Associated Charities by giving alms on the street, tells the following anecdote: A poor woman, with a child, met him and said: "Oh, sir, you are rich and happy, and I should be perfectly happy if I could only have $5 for the children at home." The gentleman said: "Well if $5 can make any human being perfectly happy, here it is." The woman, seizing it, replied: "Oh, I wish I had said ten!"

The Duchess of Marlborough died in 1744. So little do people know themselves, at least those in whom worldly pride and temper obscure the power of self-judgment, that this woman, who had tormented her husband, (whom she adored) and alienated her children and her grandchildren, who would hardly suffer those around her to draw their breath but by her will, went down to the grave complaining that all the people in the world were so disagreeable, she had never found anything to love.

Masculinities.

Ignorant men differ from beasts only in their figure.

Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up.

Bombay husbands cut off their wives' noses for punishment.

The late Thaddeus Stevens the eminent Statesman never passed a pin without picking it up.

Astoria, Ill., has a soldier of the war of 1812 who is 98 years old and saws wood for a living.

It is estimated that there are 40,000 persons in New York City that depend upon gambling for a living.

Rhode Island has admitted a colored man to membership in her State Legislature—Rev. Mahlon Van Horne.

Do not to any other what thou wouldst not have him do to you: this is the whole law: the rest is merely comment.

It is said of Bret Harte that he was the first novelist who dared to proclaim in fiction one law of morality alike for man and woman.

Lord Tennyson is tuning up his lyre for a poetical effort on the Prince of Wales' Irish tour. It will be in the old Spenserian measure.

The quidnuncs have discovered that President Cleveland shaves himself. Well he can afford to. He has no wife to use his razor on her corns.

A New Jersey man wants a divorce because his wife hasn't spoken to him for nearly two years. Some men don't know when they are well off.

Among the 1200 laws regulating the conduct of the French press is one centuries old which threatens the proof-reader with death for one blunder.

Emerson, the Boston essayist, said: "Every man would be a poet if his intellectual digestion was perfect." This shows that indigestion is a blessing after all.

Santa Cruz, Cal., boasts of a Mexican woman, resident of that city, who is not only a centenarian, but has also a third set of teeth, which are in good condition.

Sir Henry Ponsonby, private secretary to Queen Victoria, has written a letter authoritatively denying that members of the royal family are believers in Spiritualism.

Ex-Marshal Bazlaine, of France, is now in extreme poverty, and recently made a piteous appeal to the Duc D'Aumale, who sent him one thousand dollars in reply.

Hon. Anthony M. Keiley, ex-Mayor of Richmond, Va., and the new Minister to Italy, is a Catholic and his wife is a Jewess. His father was a Methodist and his mother a Catholic.

A quarrel is not without its uses, as a means of knowlege: through a quarrel you have learned that your antagonist is by no means perfect, and he has learned the same of you.

Says Lord Bacon: The best works of greatest merit for the public have proceeded from the unmarried men, who both in affection and in means have married, and endowed the public.

A California judge has decided that a man cannot recover damages from the parents who ejected him from their house for frightening their baby into spasms while attempting to kiss it.

In Washington county, Maine, a clergyman holds Sunday school each week in the skating rink. The scholars are allowed the use of the rink one-half day gratis as a reward for school attendance.

About fifteen years ago a farmer in Enfield, N. H., had a whip stolen from his stable. Recently a man from a neighboring town called on him, acknowledged the theft, and settled the matter.

A man in Detroit who celebrated, week before last, what is claimed to be his 100th birthday is able to read without the aid of glasses, his eyesight, which was beginning to fail, having been completely restored.

An Arkansas woman has just married her fourteenth husband. She is evidently a convert to the theory that thirteen is an unlucky number. Her new husband may soon discover that the number 14 is still more so.

Men, in respect to ceremonies, modes, and laws, like a flock of sheep, will, in a body, if the bell-wether can only be got to leap over a pole, continue to leap carefully over the same place when the pole has been taken away.

Mrs. Slapper, of Sumter, Georgia, has the white slippers she wore when she was married over seventy years ago. The fact that she has preserved them all these years is proof that she never used them to slapper children.

Five octogenarians, the oldest of whom was ninety-four years, died recently in Marathon, N. Y., inside of one week. Three weeks previous they were all in good health. Every one of them had lived all his life in that vicinity.

Moody the revivalist, was asked in the recent convention in Milwaukee whether he had grace enough to die at the stake. He replied: "No, I don't need it; all I want is grace enough to hold this convention for three days in Milwaukee."

Electricity has proven a great adjunct to photography. The other night the President of France, while attending a soiree, was photographed from twelve different positions, and knew nothing of it until the close of the evening, when an album was presented him containing the pictures.

In the dim distant future East Bridgewater, Mass., will boast that once upon a time one of her town fathers "slept in the White House." A leading Democratic citizen was one of a party who called on the President in Washington the other day, and while waiting his turn to be presented he fell asleep.—

Something new in leather, is the tanned and stamped buckskin for men's riding suits. It is beautifully marked, and will not fade. Over a hundred styles of this article are shown at New Orleans Exposition. They are worn for riding pantaloons and jackets in some parts of Mexico, and are worth $2 50 to $3 each.

For Life.

BY A. H. BALDWIN.

"JACK, tell us that adventure of yours in Paris," said I, to an old traveler, the other day.

And this is the startling tale he told—

"Sixty years ago I visited Paris, and was one evening seated in my apartment in the 'Hotel des Princes,' when a boy was shown in by the porter. The boy said there was a Mr. Bunnell, an Englishman, dying at a house in the Rue St. Victoire, and wished to see me.

"How could I refuse to go? There was a countryman, in a strange land, suddenly stricken down, and he needed a friend. Of course I must go. I looked at the boy, and was sure he was honest. I told him I would go.

"Yet I would not venture out in such a city unarmed; and I went to my dressing-case and took my pistol. It was one of Colt's revolvers, and had six barrels. I knew they were all carefully charged, for I had examined them only a few hours before.

"I put this in my pocket unseen by the boy, and then put on my hat and light overcoat. I had no thought of danger particularly; but I knew how many dangers might come unexpectedly in such a place. But, danger or no danger, I could not hesitate, for not on any account would I have had it said that a countryman appealed to me in his helplessness, and I would not listen.

"When all was ready, I turned down the gas, and bade the boy lead the way. We were not long in reaching the river, which we crossed by the Pont Notre Dame, as I could tell by seeing the huge old cathedral looming up in the darkness above the murky gaslight. We were soon threading a labyrinth of narrow streets, and I had as much as I could do to keep my guide in sight.

"'I can walk slower if Monsieur wishes,' said my companion, as he came nigh getting away from me in a crowd.

"'No,' I returned. 'I can keep up. But how much farther have we to go?'

"'Only a little way.'

"How far we had come, or what direction we were taking, was more than I could tell. All I knew was, that I was hurrying through a wilderness of houses, and that thousands of others were doing the same. Finally we entered a narrow, dark street, through which few people were moving; and when my guide stopped, it was before an old building the door of which was level with the street, and in one corner of the structure.

"'They'll expect me, so I won't ring,' he said, as he pushed the door open.

"We entered a long, vaulted hall, the only light to which came from a small lamp which stood within a niche by the stairs. This lamp the boy took, and then said, if I would follow him he would lead me at once to Mr. Bunnell's room. We ascended the stairs, and thence passed through a narrow way which seemed to run half around the building in a circular course. I was beginning to get tired of this long travel, when the boy turned into a new channel, and commenced the descent of a flight of stairs.

"'Hold on!' I cried. 'How is this?'

"'Oh,' the fellow replied, with perfect composure, 'we had to come through the upper part, because there's other families live in the lower part of the front. It's only a step now.'

"I confess I began to have some misgivings; but I would not turn back now, so down the stairs I went, and at the foot I found a low passage, which we followed for some dozen yards, when my guide stopped before a door, which he opened. I passed in after him, and saw him place his lamp upon a table.

"'Mr. Bunnell is in there,' he said, pointing to a door at the other end of the apartment. 'You can go and see him while I go and call master.'

"Without waiting for a reply he slipped out and closed the door after him. My first impulse was to follow him and call him back; but upon second thoughts I resolved to go in and see Mr. Bunnell. So I took up the lamp, and went to the door which had been pointed out.

"It opened easily, and I passed through, but I saw no one. There was a little cot-bed in one corner, but no one was upon it. The room was of medium size, with two doors, but not a window of any kind. The floor was of brick tiles, and the walls seemed to be of stone, or some hard cement. Where was Mr. Bunnell?

"Ah! perhaps he was in the next room: so I went to the other door, and as I approached it I saw that there was a lock upon it, and that the key was in its place. I tried the latch, and the door was opened without the use of the key; but I had taken only one step beyond when I started back in horror.

"The place was not over eight feet square, and upon the floor lay a female form, with the face, pale and ghastly, turned towards me! The rays of my lamp fell strongly upon the marble-like reflective features; and I saw that the eyes had started from their sockets, and that the tongue protruded from between the white lips!

"For some moments I was so horror-stricken that my senses seemed almost to forsake me; but when I did think, my first movement was to see if the girl was really dead. I stooped over the form and touched it, and found it stiff and cold.

"She could not have been over seventeen, and had a face and form of considerable beauty. Her dress was rather poor, and her left forefinger bore the marks of the needle.

"Around her neck was a dark, livid circle, where she had been strangled! There was nothing else in the room that I could see then—no door, save the one by which I entered, and no window.

"Of course my next object was to make my escape from this place. Whether I had been brought here to be robbed and murdered, or whether there was a plan on foot to hasten the murder of the girl upon me, I could not tell, nor did I stop long to reflect.

"I hurried out from the place, through the other two apartments, to the door by which I had entered from the passage. I placed my hand upon the latch, but it would not give.

"I tried again and again, but with no better success. The door was not only locked, but so stoutly and securely that I very soon made up my mind that I could not force it. It was made of solid oak plank, and was immovable.

"Up to this moment I had been timid and terror-stricken; but my temper became sharpened now. I felt just angry enough to desire a few moments' private interview with the party who had caused all this.

"Of course I knew the boy could be only an agent, or tool; and I hoped his master, or masters would make their appearance. Do not think that I would have you believe that I was without fear. I was very fearful for I knew my life was in danger. The very horrors of the place would have made any man fearful. But I was not tremulously so. I was calm and collected, and my little six-barrelled friend gave me a vast deal of confidence.

"After listening for awhile, and hearing no sound, I resolved to go back and see if I could discover anything upon the person of the dead girl by which I could learn who she was.

"I was startled again when I saw her, for I never beheld another such ghastly sight. I have seen men killed—I have seen men shattered almost in pieces—but that pale, marble face, with the bursting eyes and protruding tongue standing out like fiend-marks to mar its beauty—and the place, and circumstances, too, conspired to render it horrible enough beneath the murky glimmer of my lamp.

"However, I stooped down, and turned the body partially upon its side; and, in doing so, I hit the edge of the door, which swung into the room, and threw it almost to.

"At the same moment I saw a pocket-book upon the floor, which had been concealed by the flowing dress, and at once picked it up.

"It was well worn and soiled; and I knew it to be the property of a man, and not of the girl who had died. It smelled rank of tobacco and garlic, and had surely seen some service. Upon opening it I found several old papers that might give me some light upon the dark subject.

"The first which I examined was a memorandum of some sort, but in such hieroglyphics that I could make nothing of it. The second, however, was of some import; and when I had thoroughly deciphered it I had light enough. The following is a literal translation of it—

"'One body to Dr. M. de V.	(Male),	40f.
"'One body to Dr. S.	(Female),	35f.
"'One body to Dr. Z.	(Female),	35f.

"Was it not plain enough now? The whole plot was unfolded to me as clearly as could be. I was to be made food for the dissecting-knife of some studious doctor, and was already in the trap. And my body would be sold for forty francs! My soul knocked out—my wind stopped—and all for that paltry sum! My soul what a price for a murder! But then the body-catchers might get some perquisites beside. Ah—yes—surely. I had over two hundred francs in gold in my pocket; and my clothes and jewelry, and watch were worth over twelve hundred more. But they wouldn't make much by the strangling of the poor girl, for her garments would hardly have paid for the trouble of getting them off. But—hark!

"I had just returned the ghostly memorandum to the wallet, and put the letter into my pocket, when I heard the outer door open.

"As I said before, I had nearly closed the door of the vault in which I stood when I turned the body over, and now I shut it entirely, being careful to make no noise, and placed my ear at the keyhole. In a few moments I heard the voices of two men in the adjoining apartment.

"'Hallo!—the light's gone out,' said one.

"'*Hola! Hola-ho!* Monsieur your countryman is here! Is he gone? Didn't the boy bring him here?'

"'Certainly he did. Eugene could have made no such blunder.'

"'He can't have gone in there?'

"'No; I locked the door myself.'

"'There's the key in the lock now. He'll know his fate!'

"'Careful! Let's see.'

"The fellow's stopped speaking, and I heard them advance towards the door of the vault.

"They stopped and whispered a moment, and I could make out, that the two villains meant to despatch me as quickly as possible.

"I held my pistol firmly and steadily, for my nerves were as immovable as were those of the dead girl at my feet. I heard a hand upon the latch. The door was pushed slowly open, and a lamp poked in.

"'He isn't here!' said the man with the lamp, in a perplexed tone.

"'Have we lost all that?' cried the other angrily.

"The first speaker had not entered far enough to peep into my corner when he spoke. But presently he put his head further in, and as his temple came within range, I sent a bullet through his brain, and with a single gurgling gasp he fell forward at my feet. The second man hesitated but an instant, and leaped in with a heavy club, raised ready for a blow. My pistol was within six inches of his head as he turned, and as the cracking report of charge number two died away, he lay a-top of his companion, with a bullet-hole in the place of his right eye!

"I only stopped to see that both men were dead; and then, having seen that the four remaining barrels of my pistol were ready for use, I grasped it in my right hand, picked up the lamp with my left, and started from the horrid place. I found the doors open, or, at least, unlocked; and without meeting a soul, I made my way to the street, being careful to take particular notice of the house. At the first respectable-looking shop I stopped, and hired a boy to conduct me to my hotel, which we reached a little after ten. Then I told the landlord of my adventure; and he went with me to the Prefect of Police, to which functionary I told my story over again. It was a happy discovery for him; for he told me the non-prefects had been after that very trap for two weeks, having received reliable information that such a horrible den was in existence.

"This was the end of my adventure. One or two men were guillotined for the murder of the girl, I believe, and several of the gang were caught and imprisoned for life."

Recent Book Issues.

"Romer, King of Norway," "The Bitter End," "Flavia," and "A Dream of Realms Beyond Us," are dramas by Adair Welcker published in book form. They are very good reading though hardly adapted to the stage. Sold by the author, San Francisco, Cal.

Messrs. Dodd, Mead & Co., of New York publish an idyllic story of life in the Shetland Islands—"Jan Vedder's Wife," by Amelia E. Barr. A more satisfactory short novel it would be hard to find; the descriptive parts are good, the pathos is genuine, there is no lack of action and incident without anything like sensationalism, the characters are strongly and simply drawn and effectively contrasted, and an agreeable denouement is reached by artistic methods. For sale by Lippincott & Co.

Messrs. T. B. Peterson & Brothers publish "Nana's Brother," a translation of Zola's new novel. The scene is laid in the French mining districts, the daily life of the toilers being represented in vivid detail with its hardship and hopelessness, while strikes and colliery accidents furnish an abundance of sensational incident. The work of translation has been performed acceptably.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

Among the contents of the *Sanitarian* for March are the following: Sewage Disposal; Unsanitary Condition of Lumbermen in Northern Michigan; Tenement Houses and their Population; Report of New York Tenement House Commission; Bad Smells 'To Let'; Notes Upon the History of Cholera in St. Louis; Stamping Out Scarlet Fever; School Hygiene; Malt Extracts of Food; The Snow Cure; etc., etc., together with the Editor's Table, and other valuable departments. Published at 113 Fulton St., New York.

Mr. Albert Moore has the place of honor in the *Magazine of Art* for April, his Study in Drapery, printed in color forms the frontispiece, while reproductions from his best known pictures grace other pages of the magazine. Mr. Moore's art is dispassionately discussed by Mr. Cosmo Monkhouse. The opening paper is on The Older London Churches, by W. J. Loftie, which is followed by a curious account of Fashions in Waists, by Richard Heath. Both of these papers are fully illustrated, as indeed are all in the magazine. Some Venetian Knockers, are described by H. F. Brown, and the Artist in Corsica, continues his graphic journey. The second paper in the series on, "Profiles from the French Renaissance" is on Maitre Roux. Harry V. Barnett contributes a bright "Note on Gainsborough," while the editor of the magazine discusses at length the French sculptor Clodion and his work. A very sensible paper by James Runciman tells of the mismanagement of art studies in what is known as the Board School in London. Austin Dobson with his pen and Fred Barnard with his pencil have the page devoted to poetry and picture this month. Mr. Dodson's verse is in his delightful eighteenth century manner. The "Art Notes" of America and Europe are so well edited that there is little the reader will not find in this admirable record.—Cassell & Company, New York.

The Popular Science Monthly has the following contents for May: Our Recent Debts to Vivisection, by Wm. W. Keen, M.D.; Can Man be Modified by Selection?; Cholera. IV. Prevention; Methods of Teaching Economy, Illustrated; Lost Colonies of America; Religion Without Dogma; A Scientific View of the Coal Question; The Nervous System and Consciousness, Illustrated; Arctic Exploration and its Object; The Chemistry of Cookery; Pasteur's Researches in Germ—Life, by Prof. John Tyndall; Training in Ethical Science; A Very Old Master; Sketch of M. Pierre E. Bethelot, with Portrait; Correspondence; Editor's Table Literary Notices; Popular Miscellany, and Notes. Appleton & Co., New York.

New Publications.

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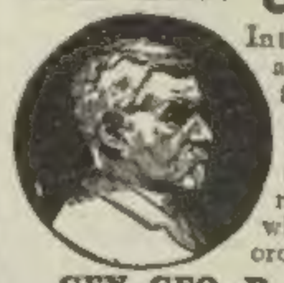


In the number of its pages, and in the size of the first edition, the May *Century* surpasses all its predecessors. It is a number especially rich in War Papers, which include: A vigorous article by

GEN. GEO. B. McCLELLAN,

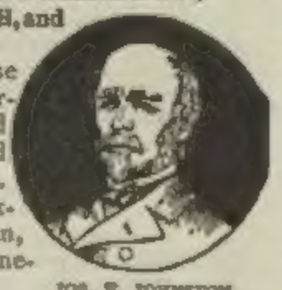
in which the writer speaks freely of his relations with Secretary Stanton, and enters fully into the plans and disappointments of

THE FIRST ADVANCE ON RICHMOND;

and three papers by the ex-Confederates,

GEN. JOS. E. JOHNSTON,

GEN. GUSTAVUS W. SMITH, and GEN. JOHN D. IMBODEN.



JOS. E. JOHNSTON.

Gen. Johnston (whose article is a reply to Jefferson Davis) commanded against McClellan until he was wounded. Gen. Imboden relates his experiences at Bull Run, with anecdotes of Stonewall Jackson.

"RECOLLECTIONS OF A PRIVATE"

describes the repulse of the troops which Gen. Johnston was leading when he was wounded. Other contents include an anecdotal paper on

GEN. GRANT AS A SOLDIER,

by Gen. Adam Badeau, with a full-page portrait from a photograph taken in 1864;

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I think of the beautiful summer,
So many long years ago,
When the lilies bloomed by the brook-side
Where the blue-eyed violets grow:
When Ernest, my brave young lover,
Came courting me in the eve,
When he whispered soft words in my ear,
And I thought he could never deceive.

Ah! we planned out our future so golden,
With the love in a cottage, you see,
Where we would live happy on nothing,
And be from all sorrow set free.
And we talked of the balls and the drama,
And the people we meant to snub,
And how he would stay home at evening,
And not go like some, to "the club."

When none but words the most loving
Should fall from the lips of each—
To tell the truth, we were both young fools,
For we thought this was all in our reach.
Well, in due course of time we were married,
And then we began to find
That love in a cottage will do well enough,
If there's plenty of money behind.

But the prospects are not very pleasant
Unless so, because without doubt,
You get into debt, want stalks through the door,
While love through the window flies out.
Then it soon got to be, in the evening,
He'd be restless, and worry and frown;
At last would exclaim, "I am sorry, my dear,
I must see a man that's up-town."

And, as for the balls and the drama,
I have not been to one in five years,
My dramas I find in the wash-tub,
My balls are dissolved in my tears.
Ah! this is a world of wonder,
And our lives but a game of chance,
And I'm sitting alone in the house,
Mending the old man's pants.

—U. N. NONS.

Humorous.

An elephant is a powerful animal; but the smallest dog can lick him.

It makes a red-nosed man very angry to have a little girl ask him in the presence of others if it hurts.

They had been married six weeks, and she said: "Now, don't stay out late, but come home soon to our little wifey tiffy!" They had been married six years, and she said: "If you go out to-night, Smith, I'm going to lock up the house and go over and sleep at mother's."

A London contemporary is authority for the statement that a young doctor has made a great professional success in that metropolis by his politeness. He was consulted by a lady who suffered from cold feet. "The reason of your cold feet, madam," said the young doctor, "is that they are not large enough to hold blood sufficient to heat them." Since then all the pretty girls in London swear by him and some of our young doctors might do a good business these hard times by profiting by his example.

MAYOR'S OFFICE,
Grand Rapids, Mich., April 15, 1885.
Charles E. Belknap, Mayor.

NOTICE.

Sealed proposals will be received at the Mayor's office, in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, until the 27th inst., at 7 o'clock, p. m., for the purchase of $135,000 City Hall bonds of said city.

Said bonds are payable July 1st, A. D. 1924, and draw 5 per ct. interest, payable semi-annually on January and July 1st; principal and interest payable at the office of the treasurer of said city.

Bids will be received for the whole or any part of the loan, the money to be paid and bonds delivered June 1st, A. D., 1885, or for the whole amount, payable in such instalments as may from time to time be called for by the Common Council of said city.

No bids will be considered that are below par and accrued interest, and accrued interest must be paid in addition to any premium that may be offered. Parties bidding to pay in instalments, will be required to give bonds satisfactory to the council, that they will comply with the foregoing terms if their bids are accepted.

The council reserves the right to reject all bids.

CHARLES E. BELKNAP,
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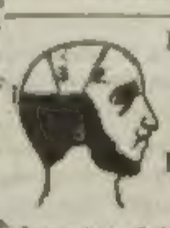

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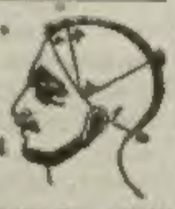

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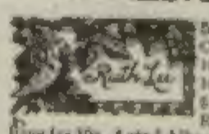

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DUFFY MALT WHISKEY CO., Baltimore, Md., U. S. A.

Latest Fashion Phases.

The newest overdresses are very full and ungored in front as well as in the back. Deep pleats, like kiltings, adjust the skirt to the form, and the front of many of the newest tunics reach quite to the foot of the skirt, showing only the tiny quilled balayeuse around the bottom of the lower skirt. Tufted woolen goods, light-weight cheviots, basket cloths, and plain serges or mohairs are all in fashionable use for spring costumes, and braids, woollen lace, or rows of very wide galoon, soutache or velvet ribbon are used to decorate. These flat trimmings are nearly always laid on before the quilling or kilting is made. Self-trimmings, however, in the shape of box-plaitings, kiltings, tucked flounces, and fan and panel trimmings, are still employed upon many of the most elegant and recherche carriage and promenade costumes of silk, satin or woollen fabrics.

There is sufficient variety in the spring shades to suit any complexion. Women know better, now-a-days, than to wear a trying color because it is predominant, and especially a shade that brings out the unbecoming tints of the complexion or lines in the face. A good way is to throw the stuff across the bared hand; if it suits the complexion of the hand, it will nearly always serve the more delicate color in the face. Also the pale green wools may have an admixture of gray, ecru or buff, in the way of a vest, cuffs and facings. Blue and red, the red of the poppy, the dahlia or plum, are satisfactorily united in blue wool dresses. Many of these are made with tailor plainness, their charm consisting in the perfection of their fitness in all ways. The material of costumes for late spring wear is generally of soft ecru cloth, or of the shades described, and white and Chuddah striped cloths of water-lily white. Less pronounced woolens are delicate, and thin enough to be worn through the summer without discomfort. There is always a delicate, yellowish hue through most of the white wools, taking in the tallow, mushroom, pale Narcissus gold and straw color. The comfortable bouffancy of the back draperies is greatly enhanced by the *foursure* being securely fastened to the belt and the knowledge that it cannot be displaced.

Fawn color and green are a good combination. A fawn-colored cashmere has a bunched-up tunic in figured cashmere of the two colors and is ornamented with bows at the side in green watered silk. The Dolman mantle is embossed with velvet moons of a lighter shade, and trimmed with woolen guipure flounces and cascades, headed with a cordon of green beads, finished off at the points with beaded chenille tassels.

The new cotton satines are less lustrous and more like exquisitely soft fine foulard silk; set floral and wandering designs cover the grounds, which are of every delicate shade of pale blue, gray, cream, silvery green, opal, rose and faint violet.

Plain and plaid ginghams are sold to make up together. The skirt and overskirt are made of the plaid or striped, and the basque of the plain. A dainty kilt skirt of blue and gray check has long overskirt arranged bias on the front with voluminous draperies behind; the basque is plain gray, with finely pleated plastron vest of blue. Another style also has a pleated vest showing from the open front of a gray polonaise having a narrow strap across the waist, and worn over a check skirt. Some very fine pin head checks are rather like Chambery in the delicacy of the finish, and make most inexpensive and stylish suits.

Not to be outdone by their more costly neighbors, even the lowest priced calicoes of French, English and American manufacture are bright with pretty designs, such as dots in a triangle, whips, interlinked crescents, sprays, leaf and branch, and arrow heads, on white, lead-color, chocolate cream dark red or blue ground.

A pretty model for a plain Chambery gingham or linon d'Inde dress is to put a very narrow pleating at the lower border of the skirt. A plain overdress has tucks in clusters of four reaching to the waist. A straight piece of the goods is tucked, and then the waist is cut with the tucks meeting diagonally in the centre, back and front. A satin ribbon sash forms a point in front of the waist, and two large loops on the side falling over the skirt. The tight-fitting sleeves consist of crosswise tucks.

A novel notion is lead beads, of the bluish-grey tinge peculiar to that metal. A mantle of velvet and lace, blended with silk, embroidered all over with these lead beads, was most original in cut. The beaded portion was draped over the shoulders, a basque of velvet coming beneath in front, and plenty of lace all round.

Among the few black mantles is one made of woven jet, pointed at the back like a fichu, and cut much on the same principle, bordered all round with wide black French lace.

A new material for mantles and other purposes has been brought out; it is a thin black fabric interwoven all over with a floral pattern in the finest beads, which glisten and sparkle, the pattern and the coloring having been borrowed from tapestry. It will be used a great deal for the most costly evening dresses.

Canvas cloth of light brown is intermixed with brown and blue striped velvet, the full vest having bands of the same velvet, *a la* Breton, at the neck and waist. Mallines is a name given to a fancy canvas closely woven, having the appearance of being plaited. The skirt of this material is considerably wider than they have been worn—viz., from two and a half to three yards. The overskirt is draped loosely over it; at the back of the waist it forms a butterfly bow, with pointed ends, and this bow hooks on to the bodice. Half the drapery falls like a simple train, while across the other bands of velvet are carried, like tucks, and the front draperies of the overskirt are cut so that they pass through a puff at the side. The bodice has a full bib of ecru at the front, and silk of the same color as the dress, forms close-set folds to the waist, so that no fastening is seen. There is a velvet collar, standing up in two points on either side.

Another variety of the canvas cloth is coarsely woven, slightly transparent and changeable. A good model in this was red and brown shot, made with revers at one side, lined with red silk; broad plaits on the other, caught up with a red bow, and puffings at the back. The bodice to all appearance was of red silk, over which the material was so draped that the red showed well at the neck and armholes, and a pointed piece down the centre of the back. There were no plaits to the bodice in front; the square back basque had a series of outstanding goffered plaits, lined with red.

Polonaises with bodices fastening from left to right across the chest are seen upon some of the latest models in overdresses. They suit very well with the fashion of raising the skirt of the polonaise on one side. These bodices must have a sloping seam down the centre of the front to secure a perfect fit. Polonaises, cut away in front to show a shirred or pleated vest beneath, are draped to form panniers at each side, while others show the forms at each side of the front extending into wide panels, which are variously decorated. With young ladies, however, the polonaise closed down the front and made very long and full is the leading model. A wide hem or a simple binding like that of a coat is the most exquisite finish to the edge of the entire skirt, front and back.

Some of the prettiest of the India silk dresses are made up with a thick wide ruching of lace around the basque, like the puffing that finishes the pointed bodice in German pictures in the fifteenth century. All styles of India silks for summer wear are exceedingly lustrous, especially in black, and are thirty-five inches wide. These are plain and brocaded in designs of trailing roses and buds, and are duplicated in colors such as pale blue, China pink, pale wood violet, cream, straw-color, pearl and rseda grounds covered with floral designs as fine as Chinese embroidery. Other less costly are strewn with flowers on grounds appropriate for street wear, navy blue, garnet and bronze.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

There seems a tendency to revive pincushions of every sort and size, and at two bazaars coming off during the early summer we hear of pincushion stalls, on which nothing but a variety of that useful article is to be displayed. There are old-fashioned and modern pincushions, and the palm of size may be given to the latter; while for dainty workmanship see the specimens handed down to us, which filled corners in the workboxes of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers. Most of us possess these relics in the form of hearts, large and small, the latter tied together in a bunch, with the initials of the owner's lovers worked on each, guitars, butterflies, oyster shells (with the exterior covered with narrow gold braid sewn on in close rows), bellows (with a needlebook inside, and a bodkin forming the point), harps, cornucopias, little mattresses, flags (with a long pin or a bodkin for the standard), and many other devices.

Later on we see fans, jockey caps, dice, round pocket pincushions (with the monogram or a flower worked on), bolsters (large circular and square ones, some of them weighted), the box and doll pincushions, and those with a hole in the centre for a flower vase or a bottle of perfume. The toilet pincushions of to-day are dainty arrangements of gathered lace over color, festooned with narrow ribbon, matching the toilet drapery or hangings of the room, and they are round, diamond, or heart-shaped. In different colors they make a goodly show on a bazar stall, with the addition of the pretty doll pincushions (in the body of a china-faced doll, dressed, put in the bran-stuffed cushion, with the skirts forming the necessary rotundity and fulness, a circular cardboard base, and a sash round the waist), and the boxes with lids that rise.

Cottage pincushions, large round flat ones of print; yachting ones, in the form of a large butterfly, with a housewife fitted in behind the wings, and scissors at the top, with the handles looking like eyes; and military ones, in dark cloth, with the regimental badge embroidered on the top, are all popular. These latter are acceptable gifts to soldier or sailor friends, and are very often augmented by slippers, or shoe case, and having tidy or handkerchief case, all *en suite*.

A novel shoe case, for travelling, or lawn tennis use, resembles two ordinary ones put together back to back, with a flap to each and a strap for the handle. A military one lately seen had the monogram on one side and the regimental badge on the other, with crossed racquets on one flap and the initials of the sender on the other. These shoe cases are equally suitable for ladies, and are neat-looking.

A coverlid for bed or sofa, or carriage rug, in a somewhat new style, is as follows: The material is blanketing of some good dark shade, and the edges are buttonholed widely, with wool of a different color, two bands of ribbon velvet about 2in. wide are run on, with space of the same width between, and at distances are circles of different colored serge buttonholed round the edges.

A bold design of leaves at the four corners and middle of each side is appliqued in serge or diagonal cloth, and again on this is a small edition in velveteen, buttonholed and veined with worsted. In the centre is a twisted band of the velveteen and serge, fitted in and appliqued, surrounding a large monogram, worked the same as the leaves. Pale peacock-blue serge and claret velveteen on a foundation of dark olive-green is an effective combination. Scraps can be used up in this manner, and the work is quick, easy, and interesting.

Standing screens are now sometimes made with the lower half of dark-colored diagonal cloth, and the upper of cream oatmeal cloth. The former has a design worked roughly over it, simulating a wall, with irregular bricks, and the latter flowers and leaves growing upwards, apparently springing up from behind the wall. Ivy is a favorite design. Dyed blanketing, with a branch of fruit stretching over it, is another popular style of work, the fruit being formed of scraps of padded plush, and the leaves and stalks of all shades of browns, yellows, and greens; also green baize, with yellow Japanese chrysanthemums, or common house flannel, with poppies worked in worsteds. House flannel is used for borderings for rough curtains, with bold designs of leaves and flowers worked over it in thick wools. Cracker workbags are novel, and derive their name from resembling an open cracker. They are usually of plush, lined with satin, such as brown, and pale blue, claret and pink, ruby and old gold, edged with silk cord or cream lace, and tied near each end with a smart bow of ribbon velvet.

Lustra painting is still much in vogue, and for mantel valances and curtains, the backs of pianos and panel screens, is always effective. A large piece of work in this beautiful art, in the form of an altar cloth, was recently presented to a church. The material was velvet. In the centre of the front was a plain wide cross of dead gold, entwined with a spray of passion flowers and at some distance, on each side, was a band of the flowers. A similar band went round the edge of the table. The antipendium for the pulpit matched.

Large album covers look well in this work, and also sachet cases for ties or handkerchiefs; it is also to be seen on lamp mats with smaller flowers arranged in a wreath. Amateur artists take pleasure in painting and embroidering violin blankets. Now that this beautiful instrument is so fashionable, it is considered *de rigueur* to have a handsome blanket, and this is frequently given as a choice gift from one friend to another. The case itself is sometimes embellished with the brush.

Birthday cards can be prettily carried out by painting the recipient's name in little flowers, and writing an appropriate motto or the usual wish in gold ink, across one corner. Writing the days of the week in one corner of correspondence cards in gold ink is a favourite amusement. These packets of cards and envelopes, sold together, find ready sale at bazaars. This is also done on the upper corner of pieces of music (substituting the owner's name), with a bold flourish underneath.

Knitting is always popular, and perhaps the following recipe for a most comfortable cap for old men may be new to many: Two pins, 5 or 6, and four skeins of 4 thread fleecy. Cast on 30, and knit 1 row.—2nd row. Increase by picking up a stitch, and knit back the 30.—3rd row. Knit 31.—4th row. Same as 2nd. Repeat the 2nd and 3rd rows till you have 40 on your pins, then * knit to within 10 of the end; turn and knit back.—Next row. Knit the 30, and also one from the 10 left at the end; repeat from * till you have knitted off the whole 10. This forms one of the gussets of the crown. You have now 40 again on your pin; knit back, and repeat from * to * until you have knitted 5 to 6 gussets, according as you wish your size to be. When finished, fasten up, and turn up about 12 rows, which forms a deep border, and looks like what is called a turban hat. In smart colors they are not to be despised on a night journey by gay young men or sleepy old ones; and of course in double Berlin wool they look better. In a small size they are very nice for little boys, especially in red or navy blue.

Confidential Correspondents.

JULIA.—A superfluity of jewelry worn on ordinary occasions by grown-up people bespeaks a vulgar taste.

SHAKSPEARE.—Rub your pianoforte keys with fine sand-paper, and polish with pumice powder or whiting.

A. F. L.—There is no such person as "Anon." This is merely an abbreviation for "Anonymous," the name of the author not being known.

ACE.—No such animal as a unicorn has being; its existence is fabulous, and the British coat-of-arms is the only authority for the form and shape of such a beast. There are such reptiles as scorpions, and in tropical climates their bite is poisonous.

HESPERIAN.—There must be some mistake about the words you quote. Rubeola means "measles." We fancy you must have got hold of some quack work on skin-diseases. Tell us in what connection the words occur, or the name of the work.

QUOTATION.—The lines—

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one,"

are in "Ingomar," translated from the German by Maria Lovell. They occur several times in the course of the play.

ALPHA.—Yours is a difficult question to answer. The conduct of the young lady in question is certainly liable to the construction you put upon it, but without hearing the other side we should be unable to say whether or not your suspicions are well-founded. We can only hope they are not.

C. C.—A young man of delicate constitution should eat nutritious food, but not rich dishes. Mutton and beef should constitute the staple of his dinners: He may eat meat twice a day. Cocoa is better for breakfast than tea or coffee. He should not smoke nor drink spirits, and he should keep good hours.

LEANDER.—The phrase "two cups full" means two separate cups; but the phrase "two cupfuls" means as much as two cups would contain. Thus "two spoons full" and "two spoonfuls" have a similar meaning. The phrase "two twins" is incorrect, the word "twins" meaning two children. Thus "three twins" would be nonsense if meant to express three children born at the same time.

INCUBUS.—Of course it is not the duty of any man to allow his own or his wife's relations to become such a burden and annoyance in his family as to injure his wife's health, or even seriously to depress her spirits. A man's first duty is to his wife, in all such matters, and if the relations on either side come between him and its performance, that duty must be discharged, even at the hazard of discharging the relations also.

J. S.—The word "pagan," derived from "pagus," a village, signifies properly the dwellers in hamlets and villages, as distinguished from the inhabitants of towns and cities: and the word was so used, and without any religious significance, in the earlier periods of the Latin language. Christianity first fixed itself in the cities and centres of intelligence: and the outlying villagers, being the last to adopt it, got the name.

FRANK.—Flute-playing, unless the performer be possessed of great talents, is a sorry business. By all means try to get a decent trade. It is a crime to bring up boys without a trade. The world is full of wrecks resulting from the blunder of mistaking a "liking" for some pursuit—often more or less trivial, as in this instance—for exceptional ability. We are wholly and strongly opposed to this policy. Let every boy, whatever his talents or expectations may be, be taught a sound and reasonable trade. It is never too late to begin.

CHATTY.—It would be hard to say who was the first woman who wore a wedding-ring; that such rings were worn by the Jews previous to the Christian era is generally allowed. As to the connection of wedding-rings with marriage, various explanations have been given; the presentation of a ring by a husband to his wife was deemed to be an indication that he took her into his confidence; the shape of the ring too was supposed to symbolise eternity and constancy, while the choice of the left hand on which to wear the ring was regarded as proof of the wife's willingness to subject herself to her husband.

LADGE.—There is no method of restoring hair, whether cut and faded through age or growing on the head, to its original color except through dyeing it. Your only chance would be to dye the hair to the requisite shade with a small quantity of an aniline dye; but, if the hair is valued, we would advise you rather to put up with the irreparable effects of time than attempt to "restore." The same remarks apply to your question as to the scar. Whenever the true skin has been cut into, the restored part differs from the natural surface. Red scars grow whiter with age: but they are scars still, and cannot be removed.

SUZETTE.—Because you are "undemonstrative," you have no right to sneer at those who differ from you in such matters. Persons whose affections are quick and vehement are usually apt to give them away, and to be "demonstrative" on meeting friends from whom they have long been separated. On the contrary, those whose affections are deep, but not vehement, and who have a strong dash of circumspection in their composition, are not apt to be "demonstrative." But the latter have no more right to sneer at the former than the former has to despise the latter. Let each class go their own way, and act according to their own natures; and then we shall have that "variety" which is said to be the "spice of life."

R. L. J.—Some marriages into which calculation largely enters turn out happily, whatever romance-writers may say; but in such marriages there is always great risk of a very different result. Take care not to allow yourself to be influenced by the uncomfortable position in which you at present find yourself. It is not pleasant to occupy a dependent position in a relative's household; it may well cause you pain to say "No" to one from whom you have received much kindness, and who tells you he has loved you for six years, and waited for you to grow up: and it may seem hard to refuse the position of affluence to which you are invited. But could you be happy as the wife of one whom you did not love? If you really think you could, marry him, for the only point in question is just this of your own happiness. But the bare fact that the situation causes you such sore perplexity makes us suspect that you could not.